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LITTLE FOXFIRE, THE BOY SPY; Or, OLD CALEB ARBUCKLE, MOUNTAIN DETECTIVE.

BY OLL COOMES,

AUTHOR OF "VAGABOND JOE," "THE DUMB SPY," "ANTELOPE ABE," "KEEN-KNIFE," "PROSPECT PETE," ETC., ETC.



SOMETHING LIKE THE TALONS OF A DRAGON CLUTCHED LITTLE FOXFIRE'S SHOCK OF FROWSY HAIR.

Little Foxfire, THE BOY SPY;

OR,

Old Caleb Arbuckle, Mountain
Detective.

BY OLL COOMES,

AUTHOR OF "MINK-SKIN MIKE," "VAGABOND
JOE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE TRAGEDY IN THE VALLEY.

It was a summer day in the year 187—.

Down the valley of the Arkansas river, in Colorado, a light vehicle drawn by two spirited black horses was moving at a frightful speed.

Two men were in the conveyance. Mahlon Jayne, the eldest of the two, was a man of fifty years. His general denoted intelligence and force of character, notwithstanding his bearded, dust-begrimed face, wore a look of uneasiness. He was dressed in the plain suit of a miner. Across his lap lay a Winchester rifle. In his belt were two revolvers.

Jack Miles, Jayne's companion, was a younger man. He, too, was dressed in a miner's suit, though he had all the appearance of a born borderman. He, too, appeared excited, for he urged on the horses with lash and tongue.

On their vehicle—a light "buck-board"—were strapped a roll of blankets, a couple of picket-ropes, and a small box of provisions.

Both men were covered with dust. Their horses were covered with sweat and foam.

They were following a dim wagon-trail that wound along the valley.

Ever and anon Mahlon Jayne glanced uneasily behind them, and suddenly, as he caught sight of some moving objects in the distance, he exclaimed:

"There they come, Jack, around the point. There is no mistaking them, either. They are Indians!"

As he spoke he took up his spy-glass that lay on the seat, wiped the dust from the lens, and then took a careful look at the horsemen sweeping down the valley after them.

"Yes, yes!" he finally cried, "they are savages, and in war-paint, too, Jack!"

"Then, by gum, we're in for it, friend Jayne," asseverated Jack Miles, "and somebody's goin' to git killed."

"Oh, Heaven!" exclaimed Jayne, "are we to be butchered alive by savages? Jack, can you see any hope for us?"

Jack Miles was an old Indian-fighter, and had never known fear before; but something or other now impressed his mind with gloomy forebodings.

"Our only show, Mahlon, is to stop and fight," he replied. "The longer we run the worse it is for us, in my opinion. We'd just as well stop and have it over with, one way or the other, first as last. Yonder is a 'blow-out,' Mahlon—shall we take refuge in that?"

"Just as you say, Jack."

Jack turned the team and drew up on the edge of the "blow-out." Alighting they unhitched the horses, drew the "buck-board" by hand down into the hole. Then the horses were led down and secured.

In a few moments they were ready for the oncoming savages. They were about two miles from the river and quite a mile to the first bluffs. Their retreat was of oblong shape, of perhaps thirty feet in width by sixty in length, and six feet deep. The sides were perpendicular. The west end sloped gradually down to the center. The east end opened into a narrow rift which, running back toward the plains, gradually grew to the prominence of a canyon that cut in twain the great bluffs beyond. This would have afforded a fine avenue of escape had they been certain that they could have made their way on horseback out of it.

Without a halt the savages, a dozen strong, came sweeping on, yelling like infuriated demons. When two hundred yards from the blow-out the two whites opened fire upon them. Both were armed with Winchesters. Jack Miles was a crack shot—Mr. Jayne was good, and at the first fire two savages tumbled from their ponies.

But this only seemed to exasperate their friends who urged on their ponies at renewed speed.

In rapid succession the defenders poured shot after shot into the ranks of the foe, and when almost on the very brink of the "blow-out,"

the savages whirled their ponies and fled from what seemed certain destruction, leaving half of their number behind dead or dying.

"Oho!" yelled Jack Miles as they whirled about, "the red devils have got enough of it! They run into a surprise party, friend Mahlon, and got gal-loriously whipped."

"But will they stay whipped, Jack?"

"We're good for what's there, Jayne; but the trouble is there comes another band, fifty strong. Mahlon, we're doomed!"

"Oh, God! my poor wife and children!" cried the miner. "They will never know how I died; and think of it, Jack, in a few days they will be in Leadville to join me, and if I should never return—oh! I cannot think of it!"

"Can't you think of some way to leave a record of how we fit and died, Mahlon?"

"Yes, but those red fiends would destroy it unless we concealed it, and then it might never be found by friend or foe. See! the red demons are circling around—going to surround us. Oh, this is dreadful, dreadful! Jack, I can't die here without leaving some kind of a record of our impending fate, and trust in Providence that it may fall into friendly hands."

He sat down, and taking a small diary from his pocket opened it, and as his eyes fell upon the last entry therein his lips quivered with emotion.

Fully an hour passed, and in all this time he was busy with his record. The Indians seemed in no hurry to renew the attack although they were now fully thirty to one. Jack Miles watched them closely, and just awhile before the sun went down behind the distant mountain range, he took the glass and scanned the savages closely. A cry burst from his lips as he looked upon a little group on one of the nearest bluffs.

"Mighty Moses, Mahlon!" he exclaimed, turning to his companion, "take a look at that knot of horsemen yonder. There's a white man among them who, I verily believe—yes, *know*, is the man whom above all others you have regarded as a friend. He is not a captive either, but a free agent."

Jayne took the glass and scanned the party. A cry burst from his lips, and in the rays of the setting sun his face looked ghastly. Turning to Jack, he said:

"Jack, you are right."

"What can it mean?"

"Treachery!" cried Jayne, fiercely, then laying down the glass he made another entry in his memoranda.

Then he and Jack held another conference. He took a tiny locket from his vest pocket and held it in his hand.

Finally the miner turned and walked around to one of his horses leaving Jack to watch the foe.

Ten minutes had elapsed when the two men were startled by a sound—a human voice. Turning they were utterly surprised to see a lithe figure—that of a mere boy—issue from the mouth of the channel opening into the "blow-out."

And, a strange looking little creature he was. He could not have been over fourteen or fifteen years of age and was even small for his years. His head was covered with a shock of fiery red hair, and his round, good-natured-looking face was splashed over with freckles. His steel-gray eyes were shaded with white brows and lashes. The collar of his hunting jacket lay open revealing his slender throat and white breast. He wore a coarse straw hat tipped back boy-like on the back of his head. He was armed with a light, breech-loading rifle. Around his waist was a belt filled with loaded cartridges. He also carried a hunting-knife and a pair of pistols.

The lad was the first to speak, so astounded were the men by his presence there.

"Strangers," he exclaimed, "the Ingins have got you cor-reeled. ar'n't they?"

"Yes, my boy, they have," responded Jayne; "but, where in the world did you come from? and who are you?"

"I come from up that canyon. I see'd you war in a fix and I come down to help you out. I'm a rattlin' Ingin-fighter if I am small—been in lots of fights, and the way I socked the lead to the varmints beat a pine woods afore. My name is Jim Rassalls, but they call me Little Foxfire 'cause I've got sich a blisterin' red head. But say, mister, did ye get one of your horses shot in the shoulder there?"

Neither of the men answered his question, for neither of them regarded him—boy that he was—as any great factor in the impending struggle. In fact, they regretted that he had joined them, for they had made up their minds, if

alive, when night set in, to mount the horses and make a dash for safety; and while they could not think of leaving the lad behind, he would nevertheless be an additional burden to one of the horses.

The harness had already been removed from the animals' backs and the restless uneasy beasts stood champing their bits as if eager to be off.

The sun was down and in a few minutes more it would be dark enough for the besieged to move, but before that time had come—as if anticipating their intentions—the Indians, at a preconcerted signal, uttered a wild, fiendish yell and went thundering down toward the blow-out.

"Hoopee!" exclaimed Little Foxfire, "they're comin' like a herd o' buffaloes."

Yelling like demons and brandishing their weapons the savage line closed in upon the miners.

"Friend Jayne, it looks bad for us now," remarked Jack, "but we can give them the best we've got."

The miner's horses became alarmed as the savages approached, and rearing and plunging both broke loose and dashed away like the wind over the valley!

"My God, Jack! our last hope is now gone!" cried Mr. Jayne; "we are indeed doomed!"

"It does look bilious, men," decided the strange, undaunted boy, Foxfire. "S'pose we dodge into the canyon and mebbey we can give 'em the slip."

The miners hesitated a moment, then darted into the narrow rift, preceded by the boy.

But, already the earth was trembling under the thunderous tread of the savages' horses. The crisis was coming.

Like a fox the boy glided along the great ditch, followed by the men.

Suddenly they came face to face with two giant warriors coming down the canyon, on foot!

A yell burst from the savages' lips, but it was their last, for the next moment they were shot down by the miners.

But the report of the weapons, had directed the other savages to the spot. In a minute the whole of the bloodthirsty horde were upon the banks of the rift.

Little Foxfire glided like a chipmunk under one of the projecting walls unseen, but, just as he did so, the bank gave way and tons of dirt, ponies and savages were hurled in one promiscuous heap into the canyon, burying the boy from the sight of human eyes.

Jayne and Miles stopped and fought like madmen. Savage after savage fell under their unerring aim or powerful blows; but at length a flying tomahawk cleft the brain of Jack Miles. A few moments later and Mahlon Jayne sunk lifeless, pierced by a dozen bullets.

The savages had at last triumphed over the two brave and gallant whites.

Fierce and wild their demoniac yells now pierced the sky.

Night came on. The stars came out; the moon came up—coyotes howled in the distance.

But the scene along that canyon has changed. Not a savage is to be seen or heard, but a silent horror lies revealed in the moon's mellow light.

The forms of the dead miners lie motionless in the canyon, mutilated, beyond recognition, by the barbarous hands of the savage.

And hard by their bodies, a human head sits, or appears to sit, upon a bank of fresh earth. It is a head covered with a shock of hair. A face that looks ghostly stare up at the moon. It is the head and face of Little Foxfire.

A wolf approaches the rift. On the bank it stops and staring at the head and face, licks its chops and squatting on its haunches looks in doubt at the object. Then, suddenly, it starts up again, utters a snarl and trots off, for it sees the face move—twitch with life.

Little Foxfire was not dead. The earth falling over him, but not upon him, had saved his life.

Digging his way out, the lad found himself alone with the dead strangers in the great valley under the blinking stars.

CHAPTER II.

THE WILD HORSE MYSTERY.

THREE years have passed since the massacre in the Arkansas valley, and I would, for awhile, take the reader to the head-waters of the South Fork of the Republican river.

In a clump of cottonwood trees, surrounded by plum and hazel thickets, two men are encamped. Three fine-looking horses are tethered to grass hard by the grove. Two fine, large Mexican saddles are lying in camp. Attached

to one of these is a lasso such as the wild-horse hunter uses.

Within the cool shade, for it is a summer's day, two men are reclining in positions of ease and comfort. One of these is a young man, the other Old Caleb Arbuckle, then known along the Canadian and Arkansas rivers as a noted wild-horse hunter. The latter is a man of fifty-five, tall and slender, with rough bearded yet pleasant face, a keen eye and steady nerve. With the exception of a wide-brimmed straw hat painted green, his suit is entirely of buckskin.

The old horse-hunter's companion answered to the name of Dr. Fred Dumont. He was a man of perhaps five-and-twenty, remarkably prepossessing and with a strongly intellectual face. His hair and mustache were of a dark-brown; his eyes were of the same hue.

By profession Fred Dumont was a physician, but a close application to business and hard study had sent him into the West to seek rest and restoration of health in the salubrious climate of Colorado. He had met the mustang-hunter at Fort Lyons, and a mutual friendship sprung up between them, which ended in Dumont's accepting an invitation to go on a wild-horse hunt, and thus we find them in camp on the afternoon of the day they arrived in the Republican valley.

As to their future actions, we will listen to their conversation.

"We'll rest to-day," said Caleb, "and to-morrow go into action, pervidin' we can find a herd to act on."

"I believe you told me you'd never been on the Republican before, did you not?" observed Dr. Dumont.

"Never on a hoss-hunt; been up here after buffloes and red-skins; but I've raked in herds o' critters down on the Canadian and Arkansas. And there be plenty of them there yit, but I come up here jist out o' curiosity. I've been hearin' 'Rabian Night' stories of a wonderful fine black hoss runnin' wild with a herd o' mustangs up here, and I've heard it'd been said by some ole hoss-hunters that lightnin' couldn't catch it. But I conceit that my mare, Posey, right out thar, can pound sod as hard and quick as any critter that ever switched a tail, and that if we git a fair shake we can take in the Black Beauty, as Joe Bilders calls it. It's a large American hoss, and Cap Sawyer, the surveyor, said that when he war surveyin' up hereaways he see'd the hoss, and with the aid of his spy glass saw that it had harness and saddle-marks upon it. If so, it's a critter that's got away from some immigrant or soldier, or bufflo-hunter, and's taken up with the wild hosses. Why, I've found old work-hosses, and even mules, among the wild critters, and if you'd believe it, I'd rather catch and break a real wild hoss than a tame one gone wild."

"Well, I should like to see the chase," declared Dumont. "In fact, I'm anxious to see you throw a lasso, Caleb."

"You'll see it, boy, no perventin' Providence, afore many days rolls over your head."

Thus the two conversed for some time. Finally Dumont arose, and, taking up his rifle, said:

"I'm going to the top of this bluff to take a look at the valley, and if I should meet a deer, I'll down it."

"All right, Doc; I'll rub old Posey down, and overhaul my lasso, and see that all's in bang-up order for work."

Dumont departed; and he had been gone but a few minutes, when he came hurrying back to camp in no little excitement, saying:

"Caleb, there's a small herd of wild horses, this very moment, within a mile of here, and with them is a large, black animal, without doubt, your Black Beauty!"

"Holy tallahoopers! you don't say!" replied the hunter, glancing at the declining sun. "I'll declare, I wasn't expectin' sich news, and I don't know what to d', either. Old Posey's not in trim for fust class work, for we rode like Satan this forenoon, and I wanted her to rest up. But I hate to let the chance at that Black Beauty slip, and I'll tell ye what I'll do: I'll 'crease' him—or try it, at least."

"What's that?" asked the young doctor.

"Why, hav'n't ye ever hearn o' 'creasin' wild horses? It's shootin' 'em in the neck. It's nice work, you can bet—takes a neat shot to do it; but I've drapped many o' them, and some come out all right, and some never kicked after they fell."

"You see, the aim has got to be exactly so as to graze the spinal column. The shock paralyzes the critter, and he'll drap as though the bullet'd gone through his heart. And then, be-

fore he recovers—if he ever does—you can have him haltered and hobbled, and at your mercy."

"Yes, yes—I understand it now," said the medicine-man; "but it certainly does require a fine shot."

"Wal, doctor, I don't stand back for any critter on the plains when it comes to chuggin' in bullets, no matter what's the game—and so here goes for Black Beauty. Come along with me to the top o' the hill, Doc."

Taking up his rifle—a Sharpe's improved—he set off up the hill, accompanied by his young pard.

"Yonder they are," the doctor said, when they had reached the top of the bluff.

"You're right, you are, young saw-bones," the old mustanger exclaimed, his eyes aglow at the sight before him; "and that is the Black Beauty, and I'm goin' to take it in, dead or alive. Wait here till I return."

He hurriedly retraced his steps to camp and presently returned, with Posey saddled and bridled.

"Now, Doc," he said, "I'm goin' to crawl around to get a position where I can get in a 'creaser,' and jist as soon as you hear the bark o' my gun and see Black Beauty drop, for drop he will, you mount Posey and ride down to where the hoss is as though all the Ingins in America war after you. I want the bridle and lariat to clap onto the critter if I don't break its neck."

"All right, Caleb!" replied young Dumont, eager to see the eccentric old horse-hunter display his marksmanship in "creasing" the wild horse.

Mounted upon Posey, ready to go at the crack of the old mustanger's rifle, he waited and watched.

A ravine skirted with bushes ran along the valley in the immediate vicinity of the herd, and Dumont concluded that the mustanger would keep under cover of this until the desired point was reached.

The sun was nearly down. Already the distant hills threw their shadows across the valley.

Although in a position where he could command a fair view of the valley and ravine, Dumont saw nothing of old Caleb after he left him, but suddenly he saw a cloud of smoke burst from the bushes at a point nearest the herd, he saw Black Beauty drop in its tracks, and, even before the report of the rifle rolled up to his ears, he saw the herd in motion.

The next moment the young physician put whip and went thundering down the long slope and across the valley. A few moments sufficed to carry him to the side of the hunter, who was now standing by the prostrate body of Black Beauty.

"I made it, boy!" the old sportsman exclaimed, his eyes radiant with joy, as he stripped the bridle from Posey's head. "It war a leetle strong, but a safe shot. By the holy tallahoopers! isn't it the sleekest daisy ye ever see'd, doctor? I do b'lieve it's a blooded racer, and if so, Caleb Arbuckle's got a Bank o' California—a hull gold mine—a National Bank."

It required but a few moments to place the bits in the animal's mouth and huddle it, although it was several minutes before it showed signs of recovery from the shock of the bullet. When it did, however, and finally regained its feet, it made one or two feeble and ineffectual attempts to get away, and then succumbed to the skillful management of Old Arbuckle.

To Dumont, however, it was plainly evident that the animal could not recover for some length of time from the effects of the cruel bullet that rendered it so inert and stupid.

With but little difficulty the animal was led behind Posey to camp, when the two men gave it a careful inspection.

"It's 'bout eight years old," observed the hunter, counting the wrinkles about its eyes, "and this is not the fust time it's been in the power of man, for here's saddle marks and harness marks onto it, sure enough."

"Yes," replied Doctor Fred, "and here's an ugly calloused bunch on the shoulder. I do believe the animal's been shot there, some time or other."

"Guess it has," affirmed Caleb, feeling the lump. "I can feel somethin' like a flattened bullet layin' right under the skin. Wonder if some fool's been tryin' to 'crease' the critter? But, see here, Doc, that bullet's got to come out o' thar, and right away, too, while the animal's still stupid. Get out your knife, saw-bones, and whack it out, and I'll hold the beast."

Taking out his pocket-knife, the young man

proceeded to perform the desired operation. Catching up the skin between his thumb and finger, he made an incision across the supposed bullet.

Then he endeavored to press the substance out, but finding it had become encysted, he had no little difficulty in doing so. But when he had finally succeeded, he found, to his utter astonishment, that it was not a bullet, but a tiny golden locket!

"Why, great holy tallahoopers!" burst from Old Mustang's lips; "have we struck a gold mine, or jewelry shop?"

"Well, we have got a locket out of that animal's shoulder, sure!" declared Dumont, as he stood gazing at the trinket in wonder; "and while it is evidence of the horse having been in man's hands before, I don't understand why it is the animal's shoulder's been made a depository for jewelry."

"Thar's lot's for you to larn 'bout horses yit, my boy," affirmed Old Caleb. "Now I think that locket's been put there to cure the hoss of 'sweeny.' It's an old-fashioned cure to make a downward incision with a knife, behind the skin of the shoulder, and drap a silver dime or quarter into it. I reckon the owner o' this hoss had more lockets than dimes or quarters and jist drapped it in. It's a 'sweeny' cure; that's all it mounts to. Posey, thar, has a silver dime in each of her shoulders this holy minute. I've put in lots o' 'em for folks, but I never put in a gold locket or stem-winder watch. Boy, you can take that locket home 'ith you and give it to yer gal, and I'll take Black Beauty."

"I'm going to open the thing," decided Doctor Fred. "There may be something inside of it that will give us some light."

With his knife he succeeded in prying the tiny affair open.

To his surprise, a small bit of folded paper dropped out of it. Taking it up, he carefully unfolded it.

A cry escaped his lips. He saw the paper was covered with writing, in a fine, nervous hand.

"Great Heaven, Arbuckle! There is a mystery about this horse and this locket!"

"What does the document say, Dumont? Read it out."

Spreading the paper on the palm of his hand, Dr. Dumont read as follows:

"IN A 'BLOW-OUT' IN ARK. VALLEY, June 17, 187—

"Jack Miles and I are surrounded by savages—death is inevitable. Oh! my poor wife and children! I fear we are victims of treachery. A white man is among the Indians; it looks like Daniel Martelle—Jack says it is him. Have left a full record in a bottle buried in this blow-out. Are going to make a dash on horses as soon as night sets in—if we fail, perhaps this may reach some friendly eye. If so, pray God funder send it to wife, at Cypress, Tenn."

"P.S. Just as I close, a small boy has joined us. Says name is Foxfire. Poor boy—is a brave, manly little fellow."

"Well!" exclaimed the old hunter, when Dumont had concluded the message, "I'll be dogged if that don't break me all up into confusion!"

"I'll tell you, Arbuckle, there is a mystery—no doubt a dark mystery, too, connected with this horse and locket—a mystery we should endeavor to solve."

In this the old mustanger agreed, and the next morning when the horse-hunters broke camp, they rode eastward in the direction of the nearest point of civilization.

CHAPTER III.

A RATHER PECULIAR MEETING.

On the very edge of a high crag over jutting a dark, deep rift in the grim old hills, a mountain goat stood with eye and ear on the alert as though it had suddenly detected the presence of danger.

But no other sign of life was visible around until a white cloud of smoke burst from the side of the mountain, and the crack of a rifle went crashing in prolonged echoes through the hills.

With a wild bleat the goat leaped into the air and then shot headlong down into the dark rift, with a bullet through its heart.

The next moment a lithe figure emerged from the bushes under the little cloud of smoke and glided along the mountain side.

It was the figure of a young girl—a dark-eyed, sun-browned little beauty of perhaps sixteen summers.

She was clad in the suit of a huntress—a short frock, buckskin leggings and moccasins, and a jaunty little cap, beneath which hung a profusion of short, dark hair.

She carried a small, breech-loading rifle. A knife was in her girdle, and hanging at her side, by means of a strap passing over her shoulder, was a neatly wrought pouch in which she carried her cartridges.

A look of disappointment clouded her pretty face as in doubt she walked to where the goat had stood and peered over the precipice into the dark abyss. But seeing nothing of the animal, she turned and started down the mountain-side, a vexed look upon her face.

Lightly she picked her way along the declivity, balancing herself by bough or vine—springing from rock to rock with the agility of a squirrel.

Finally she reached the foot of the hill and started in search of the animal which she still believed she had killed.

The sound of a little stream that came singing down the mountain-side, caused her to glance toward it.

As she did so a cry escaped her lips, for she found herself face to face with a young stranger—a boy of perhaps eighteen, clad in a full suit of buckskin and armed with rifle, revolver and knife.

And a strange-looking youth he was. He was rather undersized. His head was covered with a shock of fiery red hair and his face was splashed over with freckles. His big gray eyes seemed fairly scintillating with boyish surprise and mischief.

"How do you do, miss?" he accosted her, bowing, hat in hand.

Involuntarily the maiden started back, but as the color came back into her face, her eyes began to flash and her lips curling with scorn, she said, derisively:

"You're a horrid, mean robber, and I've a notion to shoot you!"

"Beg your pardon, miss, but I'm no such a thing," the boy replied. "You needn't fly into a whirlwind, for Foxfire Jim'll not harm a hair of your head."

"You're not Little Foxfire!" declared the girl.

"Oh, I ain't, ain't I? Well, I reckon then I'm lost, and I don't know who I am. Mebbe you can tell me who I be. I know you're a fairy, and if you're a good fairy you'll tell me who I be, and take care of me. But doesn't you see the complexion of this hair? Can't you see these freckles?"

"Could if you'd washed your face," snapped the girl.

"Whew! You're a sass-box fairy, ar'n't ye? I s'pose you consider yourself several of the gal population of Leadville?"

"You can't find out anything about me," retorted the maiden.

"Oh, smoky ruins!" exclaimed Little Foxfire, for Foxfire the boy was, "you're a mulish, contrary mess, gal! Come, can't you give a boy a square answer? I'm no road-agent."

The girl burst into a peal of laughter that rung merrily through the hills, dispelling the shadows from the boy's breast.

"You're a great fellow, Foxfire," she then said. "I knew you, but you don't know me, although you rode in the stage with mother and Helen and me all the way from Denver, and have eaten meals at our house several times since."

"Oh, bless my soul! You're that little mad-cap mischief that made fun of me on the stage, the one they called Gypsy Jayne. Well, did I ever! Smoky ruins! how you have grown, gal; didn't know you from Mrs. Lot. Hav'n't seen you since, as I remember, if I did eat at your house. Ar'n't as pretty as you used to be, are you?"

"And you don't know any more than you did, do you?" was the curt retort.

"Well, don't let's have a quarrel here, Gypsy; but tell me, did you shoot that goat lying yonder?"

"I did, and come to look for it."

"I heard your gun, but the way that goat come ker-smash down there I s'posed it jumped off the moon. But I reckon everything's lovely in Leadville? I hav'n't been there for a coon's age."

The girl answered with a nod of the head. Then, in a thoughtful voice, she asked:

"Are you a hunter, Foxfire?"

"No," he answered.

"A miner?"

"No."

"Then you must be a robber or road-agent," and Gypsy looked at him querulously.

"No, I'm not, Gypsy; but you'll never tell if I tell you, will you?"

"No, 'pon honor, I won't," the maiden declared.

"Well," added the boy in a lower tone, "I am a spy."

"Oh, mercy!" exclaimed Gypsy, "you a spy?"

"Yes, in the employ of the Vigilants of Denver and Leadville. I've been at Denver for some time, but was sent down here to help work up some outlaws and murderers that they say's gittin' bold and bad. I'm on my way to Leadville now, and great gossip! if the thugs find out I'm after 'em, they'll more than kill me. And say, Gypsy, you ought to be careful 'bout ramblin' round in these hills, or some day you'll come up missin' in the power of the cutthroats. They're pizen on pretty gals."

"Thank you, Jim Foxfire, for the warning and the compliment, and if I—"

"Harkee!" suddenly interrupted Foxfire, and the two listened.

Hoof-strokes were heard coming up the canyon.

"Back into the bushes there, Gypsy!" exclaimed the boy.

The maiden glided into the thicket and Foxfire was about to follow her, when three masked horsemen swept into view.

At sight of the lad they quickly drew rein, and the next moment three revolvers covered the boy's breast, and a voice commanded him to stand.

"That's that little sorrel-top fiend, Foxfire, now, as I'm a born mountaineer!" declared one of the men.

"Young man," said the leader of the trio, "we want you."

"You'll have fun a-gittin' me alive," retorted the boy, grasping his revolver.

The outlaws, for such they were, laughed at his bold reply.

"Oh, he's all grit," declared one of the villains in an undertone to his companions, "and he'll shoot, too."

By this time Little Foxfire had satisfied himself that the maiden had escaped unseen by the outlaws, and he would have darted into the bushes, also, had he not been afraid that the foe in pursuing him would discover the presence of the girl. As it was, however, he could only stand and face the music.

Presently one of the ruffians dismounted, and advancing toward the boy, said:

"Boy, you'd as well put up that iron, for you've got to go, and don't forget it."

They were the last words the man ever spoke, for a rifle in the thicket behind Foxfire rung out, and he fell dead!

This shot was a startling surprise to the other two men, who quickly turned their revolvers from the boy and fired into the thicket.

Taking advantage of this diversion, Foxfire shot into the bushes where he was met by Gypsy.

"I popped him, didn't I, Foxfire?" exclaimed the wild little madcap in great excitement.

"Yes, but we must run for it, Gypsy," the boy announced.

At this juncture, three more mounted men came upon the scene of action, and together the five charged into the thicket, determined to ride the boy and his unknown friend down.

The young spy, anticipating this very movement, had dashed on with Gypsy into another thicket below.

Hard by, its rein now caught on a bush, stood the dead outlaw's horse, snorting and rearing with affright.

"Here, Gypsy!" said Foxfire, seizing the horse's rein, "mount this horse and flee down the canyon as tho' Satan was after you!"

Mechanically the frightened girl advanced to the side of the horse, and was assisted into the saddle by Foxfire.

Then, as the boy handed her the reins he turned the horse's head down the gorge, gave it a blow with his open palm that sent it bounding away at a breakneck speed. But Gypsy was a fine rider and she clung to the saddle as though firmly lashed to it.

Foxfire watched her for a moment, then turned and entered the thicket. But at this moment two of the outlaws who had dismounted leaped upon him like tigers, and despite the youth's desperate resistance, he was forced to succumb.

One of the mounted outlaws gave chase after Gypsy, but he soon returned, cursing with impotent rage his ill luck in the girl's escape.

The disposition to be made of Little Foxfire was now discussed by the ruffians. The boy had been long "a thorn in the flesh" to them, and now that he was in their clutches they proposed that he should not escape.

Two of the crowd, exasperated by the death of their comrade, were in favor of hanging the young spy then and there, but the others objected to this, claiming that by carrying him

to their stronghold they would extort from him the secret of all the movements on foot against them, and the names of the leaders of those movements, and thereby elude detection by the lynx-eyed Vigilants.

So, it being decided, his hands were bound at his back; then he was placed on a horse behind one of the outlaws, the dead outlaw was thrown on behind another, and all set off up the canyon.

The man with the prisoner rode in front; that all the rest could watch the movements of the fettered youth, and shoot him down should he attempt to escape. Had he been the worst desperado on earth greater precaution could not have been observed.

And, in view of all this, the young spy began to realize that he was in imminent peril. From what he had overheard among the outlaws he concluded that the villains mistrusted him of being connected with some work or scheme of which he knew nothing, yet which, if effected, would give them trouble.

The outlaws did not remove their masks but rode on as rapidly as the way would permit—sometimes at a gallop, then at a trot, but most of the time at a walk.

The canyon grew narrower, deeper and more tortuous as they proceeded back into the hills. At times the walls crowded so close upon them as to compel riding in single file, and ever and anon a jutting ledge compelled the riders to lean forward to pass under.

The shadows, too, seemed to deepen as they advanced. To the prisoner the way seemed a fitting retreat to the dominions of Satan, and he began to have gloomy forebodings. Would he ever pass that way again? Was he entering the valley of shadows—leaving all hope behind?

While these bitter thoughts were revolving themselves in his mind, the man with whom he rode quickly threw himself forward on the neck of his horse, shouting out:

"Lean forward! lean forward!"

They had come to where a series of ledges jutting out from either wall of the canyon almost formed a natural bridge over the way, and where the shadows were deep as twilight.

All the outlaws leaned forward, but Little Foxfire did not stoop quick enough and his head bumped against a rock knocking off his hat. At the same instant something, like the talons of a dragon clutched Little Foxfire's shock of frowny hair; he was jerked bodily from the horse's back, swung outward over the canyon and landed sprawling on the top of the overhanging rock.

A yell of fury burst from the lips of the outlaw who felt his prisoner pulled away from behind him. And at the same time neither he nor his companions had seen or knew whither he had so suddenly vanished.

Little Foxfire could not yell for pain. His whole head seemed torn off, and in a dazed sort of a way—his eyes swimming in tears—he gazed around him.

"Easy, kid! Lay low and they can't see us!" a low voice warned.

Then, through the mist in his eyes, the Boy Spy saw the long, gaunt figure of a stranger lying on the rock before him. On his rough-bearded, time-scarred and homely face was a broad, bland smile of triumph that dispelled Foxfire's fears.

"It war a leetle rough, I admit," the stranger went on, "to snatch a boy outen a derficklity by the hair o' the noggin, but it was the best way I could see so I snatched."

"It's all right, mister," returned Foxfire; "mebbe my scalp will grow fast again. But, stranger, who are you, anyhow?"

"Caleb Arbuckle, once the old mustang-hunter of the Arkansaw, but now known as Colonel Caleb Arbuckle, Mountain Detective; an' I'm jest now in search of one little vagabone of a boy called Foxfire Jim, the Boy Spy, and I'm thinkin' I have—"

"Found him," declared the boy, his eyes sparkling with joy.

"Sword of Gideon! Foxfire James, you red-headed, freckled-face imp, I—shake!"

And lying there flat upon their stomachs—looking into each other's eyes with a light of joy upon their faces, the hands of the man and boy—the famous old detective and the noted young spy—met for the first time in a warm and friendly grasp.

CHAPTER IV.

TAKING UP THE TRAIL.

"FRED DUMONT, M. D."

This was the plain, unostentatious sign flung to the breeze one fine morning in the new town of Leadville, and the passers-by noting the handsome, manly and intelligent face of the

mew doctor predicted for him a success in his profession.

Doctor Fred was in fine health and spirits since his ramble over the plains of Colorado in company with Old Caleb Arbuckle, and while he was delighted with the great west and its salubrious climate, he had, when he entered Leadville, no thought of locating there for the practice of his profession. His object in going there was a solution of the mystery surrounding the death of Mahlon Jayne as brought to his notice by the strange finding of the golden locket in the shoulder of the horse. After leaving the plains he proceeded to Cypress, Tennessee, and found that the family of Jayne had gone to Leadville some three years previous, and were living there then. So he followed on to the great mining city, and there found the widow and her two daughters, Helen and Gypsy. They had landed there poor and almost friendless. They found a note awaiting their arrival, written by Mahlon, saying that he had gone to Fort Lyons to see a dying brother, and would be back soon; but he never came.

Subsequent investigation proved that his brother had never been ill, and that he had been the victim of some foul treachery. In hopes, however, that he might return, Mrs. Jayne remained in Leadville, and, assisted by her brother, Ellis Graham, started a boarding-house for day-boarders. Her daughter Helen, besides doing her part of the household work, did considerable sewing for the miners.

Doctor Dumont, on his arrival at Leadville, engaged a week's boarding at the widow's house. It was his intention of making known his discovery of the manner of Mahlon's death at the first call, but for certain reasons he changed his mind. One of those reasons was that he found Daniel Martelle, the party mentioned as the treacherous friend, in Mahlon's note, an intimate friend of the widow's. And another was the beauty of Helen Jayne, with whom he became enamored the first time he met her.

As he did not wish to be classed as a gambler or dead-beat, as most men were who had no visible means of support, he rented a cosey little office and put out his "shingle."

Nor had he long to wait for a call. That same day, late in the afternoon, Ellis Graham rushed into his office and said:

"Doctor Dumont, you are wanted at once at the residence of my sister, Mrs. Jayne!"

"Indeed? On professional business?"

"Yes, sir; her daughter of sixteen is, as you are aware, a wild little madcap, and has been in the habit of taking her rifle, with which she's a fine shot, and going out into the hills hunting. To-day she was out and had met with a boy called Foxfire, and they were talking when three masked men came riding up the canyon. Gyp hid, and the outlaws were going to kill the boy when the girl actually up with her rifle and shot one of the villains dead from her concealment. Then she and the boy dodged the others, and finally they got around and caught the dead outlaw's horse, and Gyp mounted it and escaped. She rode so hard in her fear and excitement that the animal fell dead in the valley, just outside the town. But she ran on home, and almost out of breath told of her adventure, and when the last word had fallen from her lips she fell senseless, and I don't know whether she's dead or alive."

"Nervous prostration!" decided the doctor, "for that was a desperate adventure for a delicate girl. But, Mr. Graham, were you sent out for a doctor—any doctor, or for me, particularly?"

"Miss Helen suggested you, and the rest concurred."

Dumont's heart gave a bound, for to him the hand of fate seemed plainly visible. For Helen Jayne to choose him in preference to older physicians was all that his heart could have wished for, and pocketing his medicine-case, and writing on the slate on the office-door, "Be back soon," hurried away with Graham.

"It's a wonder," said the latter as they walked along, "that the girl's here at all. I've warned her, and her mother and sister have warned her, that she'd meet with trouble yet, romping around in the hills; but she's headstrong and wayward as a woods fire; and I don't care if she is the Idol of the Camp there's enough villains 'round here to do her harm. Why, if it hadn't been for that boy, Foxfire, she'd be—well, God only knows where."

"What became of the boy?" the doctor asked.

"She didn't say."

The two soon reached the widow's home. The doctor was ushered into the sick-room by Helen, a fair and lovely girl of some nineteen

years, with a stylish-like form and a face serenely beautiful in every outline.

Gypsy lay unconscious on the bed, while her mother stood over her in great distress.

The doctor removed his hat, sat down by the sick bed and examined the girl's pulse.

"Quite a nervous shock!" he remarked.

"Is there no hope, doctor?" asked the distressed mother.

"Indeed there is no serious danger, Mrs. Jayne."

A glad cry burst from the mother and sister's lips.

The doctor removed the patient to a lounge near an open window where the cool, mountain breeze could fan her brow. Then her collar was loosened and cold water sprinkled on her face and neck.

In a few minutes she began to show signs of recovery. The young physician then administered restoratives, and in less than half an hour the girl had so far recovered as to be able to speak.

A score of eager anxious miners stood outside the door discussing in whispers the illness of the Idol of the Camp, and waiting impatiently for the doctor's verdict, while others were coming.

Finally Helen went to the door and announced:

"Gentlemen, Gypsy has recovered consciousness and the doctor says she'll be out to-morrow."

The miners tossed their hats into the air, but subduing the yell that hung on their lips, they turned and walked away.

The treatment of Gypsy proved the most gratifying act of Dr. Dumont's life. To hear the words of joy and thanks from the lips of the widow and her fair and lovely daughter, was all that his heart could desire.

Leaving some medicine, with directions for giving the same, Doctor Fred rose to leave.

At this juncture the widow, in answer to a soft knock, admitted a man whose general appearance struck the doctor as being quite remarkable.

He was of perhaps thirty-five years of age, with a tall, commanding figure, a dark eye, a long black beard and mustache well "oiled" and brushed. He had the air and the movements of a gentleman. He entered the house and was received as an old and welcome acquaintance.

The widow turned to the doctor.

"Dr. Dumont, permit me to introduce you to our friend, Major Daniel Martelle."

"Major, I am glad to make your acquaintance," and Dumont extended his hand; "I have heard of you before, I believe, sir, as the proprietor of the Red Rock mine, now the wonder of all Leadville."

"Yes, sir," responded the major with some dignity, "I have the good fortune to own the Red Rock; but, how is little madcap, Gypsy, doctor?"

"On the way to a speedy recovery."

Dumont took his departure, and as he wended his way back to his office he seemed to see more clearly the movements of the hand of fate on life's chess-board. His wild-horse hunt, the finding of the golden locket, his meeting with Helen Jayne, and his love for her, all combined to flood his soul with a radiance over which there hung but a single cloud and that was the face of Major Daniel Martelle!

Before he was scarcely aware of the fact he had reached the office, where he found two persons awaiting his return.

One was Caleb Arbuckle and the other Little Foxfire, the Boy Spy!

"Roarin' glad to meet you, doctor," exclaimed the old Mountain Detective, extending his big hand, "and, permit me to introduce to you the redoubtable Boy Spy, Foxfire Jim."

Dr. Dumont grasped the boy's hand, and, as a look of joy and admiration beamed upon his genial face, he said:

"Foxfire, I never was so glad to meet any one as you. I have had great curiosity to see you these many days."

"Smoky ruins!" exclaimed the lad; "I'm no great shakes when you do see me."

"Ay, sir," continued Dumont, "you've got a reputation that is enviable. Besides I want to see you on business."

"That's what Mr. Karbunkle told me," replied the lad; "so if I can be of any service to you I'm ready."

"Then you have not spoken to him of our secret?" turning to Arbuckle.

"Not a word, doctor; I just met him a few hours ago back in the hills where I yanked him

out of the power of some outlaws by the hair of the head."

"Yes, I heard you had been having some trouble," Dumont said to Foxfire.

"Who told you?"

"Gypsy Jayne told her folks and they told me."

"Bully! I'm glad the gal got home all safe—awful glad," and a smile passed over the youth's face. "Go on now, doctor, and tell me what you want of me."

The doctor closed the door of his office and drawing a chair up before the young spy sat down, and began:

"Foxfire, three years ago this summer were you surrounded in the Arkansas valley by Indians along with two men?"

The boy started, flung his cap on the floor and looking Dumont square in the eye, replied:

"Yes, sir, I was!"

"The men were killed, were they not?"

"Yes, sir, butchered in cold blood!"

"Did you know the men—hear their names mentioned?"

"No, sir; I only know they died fighting like heroes. I got into the blow-out after they were surrounded by the Ingins, and as things were hot when I got there I had no time to ask questions."

"Do you know whether either of those men buried anything in that blow-out?"

"If they did it was before I got there."

"What kind of horses had they?"

"Two spankin' nice black horses," answered the boy, and then he went on and described the entire outfit of Jayne and Miles.

"Yum, yum," and Old Arbuckle smacked his lips; "we're goin' to get onto the trail, doctor."

"Foxfire," continued Dumont, "did you see one or both of them cut one of their horse's shoulder and put something into the wound?"

"No; but I remember seein' one o' the horses' shoulders bleeding, and I axed if it'd been shot, and they didn't answer yes or no, but told me to watch out for the Ingins, and while I war doin' so, they worked with the horse—had quite a time with it. I s'posed they were doctorin' it. But how did you hear 'bout that affair, doctor?"

Doctor Dumont told the lad of his finding the locket in the horse's shoulder, and of its message, and of the startling fact that one of the men was the father of Gypsy Jayne.

Little Foxfire was so astounded by his story that he could scarcely believe it, but after the doctor had produced the locket and bit of paper it contained, he could no longer doubt his word.

Finally the boy began and gave a detailed account of the conflict, the charge of the Indians, the breaking away of the horses and the death of the two men and his own miraculous escape.

"Have you ever told any one of that conflict before, Foxfire?" asked the doctor.

"Lots of them; but then so many men are killed in this country that folks pay little attention to the death of one or two men."

"Well, do you think you could find the 'blow-out,' Foxfire?" asked Old Caleb.

"I might, and I might not, seein' there's hundreds of just such in that valley; and then, three years makes great changes sometimes. That 'blow-out' was more of a 'wash-out,' for it war a round hole at the end of a canyon that run away, 'way back through the bluffs into the plain. So you see the floods of the past three years may have filled the hole up with drifts or ripped it all out, and that bottle may be ground to dust and the dust may now be in the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico. Howsmever, we can go and look for it and be sure. But, does Gypsy's folks know 'bout it, doctor?"

"No; but we're going to break the news to them this afternoon, and then we propose to get ready and go in search of the buried papers, and we want you as guide."

"What'll the papers 'mount to when you git them?" asked the youth.

"It seems that Mr. Jayne and his companion were the victims of some white man's treachery. But, by the way, did you hear them mention any name while you were with them?"

"No, sir, I did not," answered the boy; "but if I can be of any use to you in that matter, I'm ready. I'm sp'illin' for somethin' excitin'."

"You red-headed scamp!" exclaimed Arbuckle, "then you don't call the bout you had 'ith them outlaws excitin', eh? Don't call bein' lifted by the hair o' the head fun, do ye, ye freckled-face vagabond?"

Foxfire laughed heartily at the jolly old detective's simulated anger, then replied:

"That's nothin' new, for me and the road-agents have it hot and heavy every few days."

"They don't seem to like me, for I've led the soldiers and Vigilants into their nests lots of times. When d'ye think you'll start for the Arkansas?"

"In a few days—can't say certain to-day; but before we go we want you to do some of the work in which they tell me you are an adept."

"Name it," demanded the boy as if ready for anything.

"Do you know Major Dan Martelle?"

"I should speculate I did! He's the owner of the Red Rock, and one of the richest men in the hull diggin's, they say."

"Well, we want you to manage to secrete yourself in his office this evening between the hours of four and five o'clock, if you possibly can, and make a note of all you can hear or see."

The boy's eyes opened, and, as a thought flashed through his quick brain, he remarked:

"Ah! you suspect the major of being the cause of them men's death, don't you?"

"Time will tell, Foxfire," replied Dumont, evasively; "but I want you to do me that favor. At the time I have mentioned, I learn that the major is invariably alone, looking over his books of the day's transactions. We propose to have a letter of some kind handed him at that time which may touch him in a tender spot."

"You mean," observed the boy, "that you're goin' to throw out a feeler."

"Exactly."

"I'll try it doctor, though daylight jobs are hard to engineer; but I've never failed yet in gittin' my work in when I set out to do it."

"Report here as soon as you can," ordered Arbuckle; "this'll be head-quarters for the present."

"All right," replied the boy; "so I guess I'll take a promenade down in the direction of the major's office."

He left the doctor's office, having surely impressed his two friends that he was a strange and remarkable boy.

CHAPTER V.

THE BOY SPY AT WORK.

MAJOR DAN MARTELLE was seated in his private office alone. His clerks had closed their books for the day and gone away to their lodgings.

The major sat calculating the cost of some new machinery that he was thinking of introducing to enable him to develop more rapidly the wonderful hidden wealth of the Red Rock mine, of which he was sole owner. The figures seemed to involve him in deep and perplexing thoughts, for he did not notice the presence of a boy, who had come shyly into the office, until the boy had spoken:

"Please, Mr. Major Martelle, don't you want to hire a good boy to keep your office clean and work in the Red Rock?"

The major raised his eyes and glanced contemptuously at the intruder for a moment, then thundered out:

"Get out of here, you young vagabond, or I'll lift you out on the toe of my boot!"

"Good-by," said the boy, as he turned away, his eyes sweeping the room as he did so, and walked out of the office, whistling as merrily as though he had struck paying dirt.

He walked across the street and sat down on the doorstep of the "Best Chance Saloon," from whence to watch the major's door.

He had sat there but a few minutes when a man came along, put his head in at the door of Martelle's office and said something to the Major, who shouted back, "All right, judge."

Immediately Martelle came out, and, taking the other's arm, the two walked over to the Best Chance and entered.

The boy arose and sauntered aimlessly, yet rapidly, down toward the major's office. Near the entrance he stopped and looked up and down the street. Scores of men were hurrying to and fro, but each seemed intent upon his own thoughts, and so the boy strode into the office.

In one corner of the room hung a long, rubber coat the tail of which covered the tops of a pair of big rubber boots that stood on the floor.

Turning the boy quickly backed himself into the corner then raised one foot then the other and set them down in the bit boots without moving them. Then he lifted the coat out from the wall, pressed himself into the corner and allowed it to fall back into its natural position, covering his lithe, slender form so that no one would ever have suspected that Little Foxfire, the Boy Spy, stood in those big boots behind that dust-covered coat.

It was several minutes before the major came back, and he had scarcely been seated when he

did return, before some one else entered, saying:

"Mr. Martelle, I have a letter for you."

"Thank you, Mr. Graham, thank you," rejoined the major; "but, by the way, how's little madcap, Gypsy?"

"Nearly as frisky and frolicsome as ever," answered her uncle, for he the man was; "but she's mournin' the loss of her rifle, and declares she'll go back after it alone if somebody don't go for her."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the major, breaking the seal of his letter and glancing at the name of the writer, when unthoughtfully he said, "Ah! this is from Helen!"

"Yes, sir; good-evening, major," and Graham left the office.

Turning to the light, within a few feet of the young spy, the major, in a spirit overflowing with good feeling, read in a half-monotone, as follows:

"MAJOR MARTELLE:—

"DEAR SIR:—Would you believe me, our old sorrow for our lost father has been renewed this afternoon by learning some of the particulars of his disappearance. Hopes of his returning are forever gone. He was killed by the Indians, and, it is thought, through the treachery of some white man. The chances are that a full account of the massacre and the parties involved will be brought to light. Under the circumstances, and knowing your generosity of heart, I must beg that you defer for a few weeks longer my answer to your proposal for my hand in marriage.

"Yours in deep sorrow, HELEN JAYNE."

"My God! can this be so?" the man muttered when he had concluded the missive, "or is it simply an excuse to prolong that answer? But I must know more about that—"

He did not finish the sentence for, at this juncture, a man bolted suddenly into the office, and advancing put out his hand, saying:

"My dear old Martelle, how do you do?"

Martelle took the man's hand while he stared up into the stranger's bearded face in perplexity.

"Don't know me, do you, major? Don't know you're old, old pard, Jerrold Tweed, do you?"

"Great Jehovah!" exclaimed the major, in apparent joy, "how's this, Jerrold? Why, old boy, I'm glad to see you out in the free air again! How is it? Here, sit down—I'll shut the door; wasn't you sent up for twenty years?"

"I should ponder! Twenty full round years, major, but you see consumption set in—ha! ha! ha!—and they seen I was going to die, and so the Governor pardoned me out on the certificate of the prison surgeon, the noble old soul! I've been out these six months—out in the mountains inhaling the free fresh air till I'm as good as new."

"I'm glad to hear it, Jerrold, old boy."

"And I'm glad to hear the Red Rock's the bonanza of the country. But, how's the Cap Sheaf panning? Ha! ha! ha! that was the cleverest exchange I ever heard of."

"You want to be careful, Jerrold, for there are folks in Leadville that might want an interest in the Red Rock. But, by the way, I just received a letter informing me that Mahlon Jayne's family had at last learned, through some source, that he had been massacred by Indians, through the suspected treachery of some white man."

"The deuce you say!" exclaimed the man Tweed. "Oh, well, but thunder! I don't b'lieve they will ever git down to bed-rock facts in the case, so I ha'n't worry myself tryin' to investigate a three-year-old murder. But I see Mr. Jayne's family are here. I saw them to-day—took dinner at the widow's house, and I must say she's got two of the sweetest girls I ever saw. By Jove! I'm goin' to win and wed that Gypsy. She's my style, darn her little pieter! But, look here, major, I promised the prison surgeon five thousand dollars—upon my word and honor—if he'd make my case out serious enough to touch the Governor's pardoning sensibilities, and he done so, and I haven't a dollar to my name. Haven't had but one dollar in my pocket in six months, and that I stole from an almond-eyed Chinese. And now you can guess my mission here to see you."

"You want to borrow the money of me?" asked Martelle.

"Of you, major," was the laconic reply.

The major's brow darkened in spite of himself.

"Well, Jerrold," he said. "I'm a little cramped at present. I'm buying an immense amount of costly machinery for the mine."

"Can't help it, major, the money must come. I'm going to keep my word with the surgeon if it takes all Leadville, Silverville and Goldville

to do it. I'm a man of my word—you know that, major. Besides, my dear friend, arn't I a kind of a silent pardner in this Red Rock business?"

"Jerrold, I hope you haven't come here to make me trouble."

"God bless your big soul—no! I only want five or six thousand dollars now, and a little social backing at the widow Jayne's, for I'm set on marrying that musical little Gypsy. With the money and the girl I'd be willing to ship for Honolulu or Jericho. But they say all the old St. Joe boys but you and I are dead, major?"

"So I understand," shortly.

"Then you don't roam around like you did?"

"No," as if to say, "Quit treading on my toes."

"I'm going to quit it, too, so you needn't be afraid of me killing the dodo that lays the golden egg; nobody shall ever find out from me that we are working the other mine."

"I say, Jerrold," said Martelle, fidgeting in his chair. "I'm going to investigate this report about my friend Jayne's death, and if the way is all clear still, I can fix you out, I think, handsomely. Come around at four to-morrow evening, and I'll see what can be done."

"All right, Dan, I guess I can wait, on a pinch. Good evening," and Jerrold Tweed arose and departed in no very pleasant mood.

Major Martelle arose from his seat and paced the floor impatiently, uneasily. A frown was upon his brow, a look of fear in his eyes.

Books and figures no longer were of interest to him, and putting on his hat he left the office, closing and locking the door behind him.

Scarcely had the key been withdrawn from the lock, when the rubber coat in the corner was pushed aside, and the Boy Spy stepped out into the room.

"Locked in, by scissors!" he soliloquized, stretching himself to drive the ache out of his legs, arms and body; "and how'm I to git out?"

He looked around the room. There was no outlet save through a window opening on the street, and as passers-by were still numerous, he dare not attempt to go out that way yet. His only chance was to wait until darkness set in, and then raise the sash and leap to the ground.

So he sat down in the major's office-chair, threw his feet on a table, and looking into a small mirror that hung facing him on the wall, he adjusted his wig of short, brown hair, bowed to himself; winked, then indulged a silent laugh.

He was compelled to remain in the office for two hours. Darkness had now set in, and raising the window, he propped it up, and then leaped to the ground and scampered away.

In less than ten minutes he knocked at the door of Doctor Dumont's office, and was admitted by Caleb Arbuckle.

He found a nice lunch and a cup of cold coffee awaiting his return.

"What success, Foxfire?" asked Doctor Fred.

"Good—glorious, better than you ever dreamed of!" replied the spy.

"Then sit down and eat a lunch before narrating your adventure, for you must be hungry."

The boy was hungry and partook of the viands with a keen relish. After he had finished, he turned, and in a low tone, gave a detailed account of all he had heard in the major's office.

"Sword of Old Gideon!" exclaimed Old Arbuckle; when he had finished his story. "I should say you did get a whole volume of facts, you young Modoc!"

"From that something more than the death of Mahlon Jayne may be developed," remarked Dumont. "What kind of a looking man was that Jerrold Tweed, Foxfire?"

"I couldn't tell you, doctor. I could only see the face of the boss of the Red Rock, with one eye at that, and I war too afraid to move the coat so's to git a squint at Jerrold's face. I don't think it was an exquisite, lovely face if it is like his heart. I tell you, he talked straight at the major, who squirmed like a tramped-on worm. But Jerrold had a peculiar voice that I'd recognize in bedlam, a hundred years from now."

"I'd give my interest in the Polar Sea Ice Company," said old Caleb, "if we could only put our hands on Jerrold Tweed. He and Martelle must be old chums, the way they talked, and his demands on the boss of the Red Rock may bring about a rupture between them, when Tweed might squeal. If I could get some of the bottom facts—Sword of Gideon! wouldn't we create a sensation throughout Leadville?"

"And so the major is uneasy over the news of the discovery of Jayne's death and the sus-

picious of white man's treachery! By the courts of justice! Dumont, we've circumstantial evidence enough now to make an arrest; but, then, we'd better try and get the bald-headed, open-faced, clear-cut facts if we can, first; for, if we should make the arrest of a man like Martelle, whose wealth and standing commands such a wonderful influence, we could never convict him on circumstantial evidence, and our failure would result in our being fired out of Leadville, or swung to a limb, for daring to cast reflections on the 'foremost and purest man in the camp.'

"I know how these things work. A man's wealth buries outen sight a great multitude of sins."

"We must have Jayne's other record, if it can be found; then, with it and Foxfire's evidence, I think we can bring the wolf to bay."

"Then we had better start day after tomorrow," advised Dumont; "but, as I promised Mrs. Jayne that I would visit her as soon as Little Foxfire came back, I had better be going. And, Foxfire, I promised Gypsy that I would bring you along."

"Good for you, doctor!" exclaimed the boy. "I'll be awful gloriously glad to see that little gal."

So washing his face and brushing up his hair, he was soon ready to go.

The two took their departure, leaving Arbuckle to await their return.

They walked briskly along the now almost deserted streets in silence, and in a few minutes reached the widow's residence.

The boarders had all left long since for their lodgings.

The moon was up, and her mellow beams, falling to earth, lit up the door-yard with almost the brightness of day.

On the door-step stood little Gypsy, looking quite pale in the moonlight. At sight of Foxfire she advanced to meet him, saying, in a thoughtless, girlish way:

"Oh, Little Foxfire! I am so glad to meet you again, for I was afraid their horrid outlaws would kill you. How did you get away, anyhow?"

"Well, I was just snatched away," the boy replied, stopping, and taking off his cap, while the doctor passed on into the house. "A fellow named Arbuckle just reached down from a neck, grabbed me by the hair, and swung me into liberty."

"Oh, dear!" cried the maiden. "But, Foxfire, they tell us you were present when poor, dear papa was killed by the Indians?"

"I guess I was, Gypsy," with a tinge of sadness in his voice.

"Oh, poor papa!" sighed the maiden. "We have waited and waited so long for his coming! Foxfire, I want you to tell us all about his death, will you?"

"Some time I will, Gypsy, but I can't now, very well."

"Well, you don't want to forget your promise, now," the girl reminded him; then changing the pitch of her voice she asked: "when are you going to start in search of the records papa left in the Arkansas valley telling all about his death and the bad white man that had the Indians kill him?"

"Sh! Gypsy, don't speak so loud," cautioned the boy, as a man in a long coat with the collar turned up and his hat slouched, walked slowly by within a few feet of them; "we may start day after to-morrow."

Thus the two conversed for several minutes when Gypsy conducted Foxfire into the house and introduced him to her mother and Helen.

In the course of an hour Dr. Dumont and the boy came out of the house and in silence retraced their footsteps back to the office.

Dr. Dumont entered first and as Little Foxfire was about to follow, the figure of a man brushed past him, glancing into the office and hurried on.

The Boy Spy recognized it as the same disguised form that had passed when he stood in the widow Jayne's dooryard talking with Gypsy, and he would have staked his life on the man being Major Dan Martelle!

The wolf was restless—uneasy else he would never have been prowling alone under the midnight stars.

CHAPTER VI. A FEARFUL RIDE.

FIVE days succeeding the events narrated in the previous chapter, three persons well armed and mounted, with two pack animals lightly loaded, were riding slowly down the Arkansas valley.

They were Little Foxfire, Dr. Fred Dumont and Caleb Arbuckle, and they were in search of

the "blow-out" wherein Mahlon Jayne and Jack Miles had been killed by the Indians.

It was the middle of the afternoon. The weather was warm yet a pleasant air was blowing up the valley into the faces of the dust-covered horsemen.

Little Foxfire had little recollection of the exact location of the scene of the massacre, nor could he even tell within fifty miles of where it occurred. His greatest hope lay in the possibility of being able to recognize the place when he came upon it; but, even in this, the chances were against him for the floods of the past three years may have completely obliterated the blow-out. Besides there were so many bluffs, creeks, mottes of timber and blow-outs along that great valley having such a close resemblance that it would be difficult for him to designate the right one, since, when the massacre took place, he was but a mere child, charging his mind with none of the particulars of the place of the conflict and its surroundings.

So far their journey had been a quiet and pleasant one. The Indians off in the hills to the westward they knew were, and had been ever since the new mines had opened, in a condition bordering on open hostilities. But from this source Arbuckle, who had of late been watching the movements of the red-skins, apprehended no danger. It is true a number of miners, singly and in small parties, had been murdered while prospecting in the hills contiguous to the Indians' country, but to molest them the Indians would have to come a long ways out of their range.

Little Foxfire, however, contended that no one in the valley of the upper Arkansas would be safe from Indians until the Indians were all safe in death, and in this the boy was found to be right, for, suddenly, as they rode along, he reined in his horse, saying:

"Pony tracks! or I'm as blind as a snake in dog-days!"

"There are pony tracks, by the sword of Gideon!" declared the old detective; "but I reckon it's been a herd of wild ones."

"Nary wild pony thare, colonel," the boy decided; "a herd 'd 'a' straggled out more than them did, and cropped the grass as they went along, for they've been walking. If they'd been running then I wouldn't argify with you, colonel, for a feller couldn't 'a' told much 'bout them then. Still, I don't want to hold my judgment up against a feller that's older than I be."

"Well, we had better make sure of these tracks before we proceed any further," said Dumont. "This valley has always been set with death-traps ever since Columbus discovered the continent."

The river lay over a mile to their right, while two miles to the left the valley, gradually rising, terminated in a range of low bluffs cut in twain in places by deep canyons. Now and then a creek flowed down through one of these gaps and found its way into the river. Before our three friends, not over a mile away, was one of those creeks, whose banks were fringed with thickets of dense brush, with now and then a *motte* of fair-sized timber. And out a ways from the creek, near the foot of the bluffs, was a little chaparral. All these afforded admirable hiding-places for a lurking foe.

After a few moments' discussion Little Foxfire dismounted, and, giving his horse into Arbuckle's charge, he shouldered his rifle and set out to reconnoiter the timber along the creek and ascertain, if possible, the truth concerning those pony tracks.

He did not follow the tracks, but struck out straight for the creek, up which he turned as soon as under cover of the timber. With all the care and caution born of a life amid constant dangers, the youth glided through the thickest of the shrubbery, stopping now and then to listen.

Finally he came to a beaver-dam, on which he crossed to the opposite side of the creek, and turned into a narrow ravine that led away from the stream. He had followed this perhaps a mile, when he heard what appeared to be the sound of horses' hoofs, and, climbing up the bank, he crawled along, under cover of some bushes, to a point whence he could obtain a view of the great plain on his left and the valley on the right.

To his surprise he saw a herd of wild horses sweeping over the plain toward the river in a course that would bring them close to where he lay, closely pursued by a horseman, in whose hand was held a lasso ready for the throw.

There were some twenty in the drove, and they seemed to have been hard-pressed, for the mustanger had already passed a few of the hind-

most, and was forging on ahead, evidently intent upon catching the leader, a noble black stud.

They were half a mile away when first discovered. The young spy could not tell who the mustanger was, but it occurred to his mind in an instant that it was Old Mustang Sam, a noted horse-hunter of the Arkansas, whom they all well knew. He concluded to make his presence known to the man, but then, upon reflection, he thought that such an act might be the means of the horse-hunter losing a prize for which he had undoubtedly given many an hour's hard riding.

To Foxfire's surprise, however, the hunter gained so fast upon the black stud that, when but a few rods from where the boy lay, the lasso shot from his hand, and, true to the aim of that skillful arm, the noose fell about the pony's neck, which the next moment was down struggling in the fatal coils.

With an involuntary cry of joy Foxfire sprang to his feet and ran out of the bushes, for he had recognized the man as Old Mustang Sam sure enough, and resolved to assist him with his pony; but at this instant, before Old Sam had seen the boy, a wild, savage yell rose upon the air, and then from a chaparral not four hundred yards away burst a band of a dozen mounted savages, who came thundering down toward the horse-hunter, yelling like demons.

One glance back over his shoulder told the mustanger of his peril, and whipping out his knife he cut the lasso loose from his saddle, setting the wild stud free. But before the animal could regain its feet Old Sam saw the lithe figure of a boy glide from the direction of the bushes and leap upon the back of the wild horse.

"Holy thunder! it's Little Foxfire!" cried the mustanger, as he put spurs and dashed away.

"Bet it is, uncle Sam!" answered the boy, as the pony, frantic with fear, leaped to its feet and sped away like an arrow, the lad clinging to its long mane and sitting as firm as a young centaur.

With his knife the boy cut the rope about the pony's neck, giving it greater freedom, which it enjoyed in a few frantic leaps into the air; but failing to dislodge the burden from its back, and terrified by the yelling savages, it straightened out and sped away like an arrow.

For a short ways Old Sam and the boy rode close together, and even spoke a few words, but finally the stud sped away from the mustanger's horse. Still Old Sam followed on behind, but only for a short distance, for suddenly the ungovernable stud struck off on a tangent to the right, and as he did not consider the course the safest one, he kept on directly southward.

The Indians at once divided, the greatest part of them following Little Foxfire. This the pursued quickly discovered, and as Foxfire could do nothing toward shaping the course of his horse, he felt that he was, indeed, in a serious predicament, for the rate at which the stud was exerting itself could not last long. It finally took a straight course toward the river, and as it sped across the level valley its daring rider noticed, with no little elation of spirit, that it was gaining on the pursuers, but as they neared the river the boy began to entertain fears from another cause—that of the stud, in its wild, headlong race, plunging into the river.

To avert such a danger the boy attempted to draw his pistol so that he might shoot the animal when near the stream, but in doing so he dropped the weapon to the ground, and nothing now but a knife remained in his possession. But before he could draw this the few scattering trees along the river bank swept past him and the next moment pony and rider went headlong into the water over a ten foot embankment.

Both horse and rider sunk beneath the waves and when they appeared on the surface again, they had parted company. The pony had become turned in its mad leap and at once struck out for the shore from whence it had just come.

But Little Foxfire did not follow. Despite his fall and ducking, he received no injury, and maintaining his presence of mind he threw himself on his back and swam like a beaver for the opposite shore.

The river at this point was deep but not over one hundred yards wide, and being a remarkably fine swimmer the boy succeeded in reaching the bank and secreting himself in a clump of bushes, before the red-skins came up.

The pony had been less fortunate, for the current had carried it down the stream to where the bank was so high it could not climb out. The Indians discovered it the moment they came

up, and believing the boy was secreted near, they dismounted and began running along the bank like hounds searching for a trail.

Suddenly an exclamation burst from a warrior's lips, as he pointed down the stream, on whose current Little Foxfire's hat was drifting away.

Believing the boy's head was in it, a dozen shots were quickly fired through it, but with no satisfactory result.

From his covert on the opposite side, the boy sat and watched all these movements with a smile upon his face.

But while watching them, he was startled to see a white man ride up on the trail of the savages and address them in an excited yet, to Foxfire, inaudible tone.

The boy shook his head.

"Shoot my shadow!" he mused, "if there isn't a white renegade with them red demons! Heavens and earth! what if the doctor and Old Caleb Arbuckle should go like Mr. Jayne and his friend? But then they'll have to do some fightin' afore they git that pair o' folks. But let's see—where are the boys? Dogged if I didn't whirl and dash and scoot around over that valley so fast that I'll be chewed all up if I know whether my friends are above or below me; but on a hop, skip and a guess, I should say they are above. But I do wonder how Old Mustang Samuel come out in his end of the race? Hope he's been as lucky as I, for I do want to press the old posey's palm again."

The boy remained in concealment until the Indians had given up the search for him and gone off; then he rose, and moved away up the river, believing his friends were in that direction.

He hurried along for an hour or so, keeping a sharp watch across the water; but as he went on and on and saw nothing of his friends, he began to think that he might have made a mistake, and that they were down the river instead of up.

Finally he stopped and glanced toward the west. The sun was hanging just above the top of the dim mountain range. Night would soon be upon him.

He became restless and uneasy. He had no sign of a weapon, having lost his knife in the river.

What should he do?

Which way should he go?

As these thoughts were revolving through his mind, he heard a sound like the dip of a paddle. He turned quickly, and glancing up the stream beheld a long log canoe, or dug-out, coming down the river.

It contained three occupants, and to the lad's surprise he saw that one of them was a female.

The boat was standing well out in the river. One of the men handled the paddle, while the other sat facing the female, whose very attitude told that she was a captive.

The Boy Spy's blood fairly leaped in his veins. The very faces of the men convinced him that they were outlaws or renegades, carrying into captivity some pure and helpless girl. But what could he do toward aiding her? He was weaponless, powerless. His trusty rifle lay in the bushes on the bluff miles away.

He crept as close as he could to the water's edge and peered through the bushes at the boat. When it came opposite him the bowed figure of the captive moved. Then she lifted her face and glanced toward the shore, as if intuitively conscious of a wild young heart beating in sympathy for her there.

At sight of her sad face Little Foxfire started up, his eyes glaring, his fingers clinched, while a half-subdued cry escaped his drawn lips. He recognized that white face. It was that of Gypsy Jayne, the Idol of the Hills!

CHAPTER VII.

THE BOY SPY TO THE RESCUE.

LITTLE FOXFIRE could scarcely believe the evidence of his own eyes—that Gypsy Jayne was before him hundreds of miles from home—a captive in the power of those villainous-looking strangers; but when he had fully realized that such was the case, and that he was powerless to aid her, he could scarcely restrain his emotions. He bit his lip that the thoughts surging through his brain might not find expression in an outburst of words. He clinched his fingers till the nails almost cut into the palms, and, half-crouching, he stood glaring through the bushes at the boat like a wounded tiger preparing to leap upon the offending hunter.

The canoe floated some distance before he moved a muscle. Then, crouching still lower, he crept along in the shadows, resolved to fol-

low the craft even though it went down to the ocean. His movements were as noiseless and yet as rapid as the fox's. Every faculty was on the alert—every fiber of his body strung to its highest tension.

He followed along for half a mile, when to his happy surprise, he saw the boat suddenly turn toward the shore. It touched the beach in front of a high chalky bluff that rose up among the shrubbery some thirty feet back from the water.

Creeping as close as he dare, the youth watched the movements of the men. For awhile he was in doubt as to what they intended to do, but he finally discovered that they had halted for the night.

"Thank God!" was the lad's mental ejaculation; "I shall now wait and watch for an opportunity to act."

The men landed and drew the boat partly out of the water. Gypsy was then given her choice of remaining in the boat or going ashore. She made no reply to the man that addressed her, but burying her face in her hands, she bowed her head and burst into tears. Her sobs reached the ears of Foxfire, and again aroused that demon of revenge in his young heart.

Some provision was taken from the boat and offered the captive, but she declined it.

But the men sat down and ate heartily, conversing, in the meantime, in a tone that was inaudible to Foxfire.

The darkness of the night soon blended all in a confusion of shadows; but it was not long until the moon came up shedding her soft beams full upon the river, the boat, the girl and her captors.

Gypsy still reclining in the canoe sobbed herself to sleep, when one of the men arose, took a blanket from the boat and laid it over her little form.

An hour later, Foxfire, who had dared to venture still closer under the shadows, heard one of the men say:

"We had as well let her rest in the boat as she is sound asleep. I'm afraid she's goin' to pine herself to death. But Budd, you lie down and sleep and I'll take the first watch."

"All right," said the other taking up a blanket, "I'll lie down here at the foot of Old White Chalk where many a night the gay outlaw, Night Hawk, and his bold band have slept in days gone by."

"Better not get too close there if you don't want to get mashed, for I noticed when we landed that the face of Old White Chalk is nearly ready to scale off in ten ton chunks."

The man glanced up at the broken, shaky facade of the rock that gleamed like marble in the moonlight, then deliberately went and laid down at its base and drew his blanket over him.

The other taking his rifle seated himself on the beach near the prow of the boat.

Between the two men was a level strip of white sand nearly two rods wide, so that to the watcher in the bushes all appeared quite distinct in the moonlight.

By this time the young spy had decided on his course of action. It had been suggested by the outlaw's remark concerning the danger of lying under the rock. He only waited for the proper moment to strike.

An hour went by. The figure in the boat, the watcher on the beach, the sleeper under the rock were all motionless.

Crickets in the crevices of the cliff chirruped unceasingly. Tree-frogs on the boughs overhead piped their doleful lays.

Little Foxfire now rose from his seat. He glanced around him and then up at the clear dome of heaven. He saw a star leave its orbit in the zenith and go trailing down the southern sky. His pulses quickened and his eyes brightened, for that to a plainsman was an omen of success.

Turning the boy crept with the silence of a shadow to the top of the chalk cliff that was crowned with the shadows of overhanging bushes. Creeping to the edge he peered down upon the sleeping outlaw, then dodged back and on his knees he began crawling about feeling around him for a rock. It was several minutes before he found one to suit him, and when he did he lifted it with great effort and moved back to the edge of the cliff and dropped it over.

As the stone tore down the face of the broken, shaky cliff it started tons of spalds and toppling blocks of the great rock that fell like an avalanche on the sleeping outlaw.

At the sound of the crashing stones the man on the beach started up and turned toward the cliff. A perfect fog of dust and dirt was boiling up from its base, and from out that fog came groans and cries for help.

"Great God!" cried the guard, in a tone that sounded strangely familiar to Foxfire, "I told him not to lie down there!"

Gypsy was aroused by the man's cries of agony, and flinging aside the blanket that covered her, she rose to a sitting posture and gazed around her in bewilderment.

She saw a lithe figure dart from the shadows across the moonlit beach, snatch up the rifle of the guard, who now stood in the cloud of dust trying to extricate his friend from beneath that heap of rocks, throw it into the boat, shove the craft off into the water, leaping into it as he did so.

All this had been done so silently and in such a brief space of time that the canoe was a rod from shore ere the terrified, bewildered girl could realize the fact. And so deeply engaged was the outlaw digging for his friend that he had not discovered the escape until it was half across the stream.

Then with an oath he ran for his rifle. Precious moments were spent in looking for it, but he found it was gone and then his fury knew no bounds. He became almost frantic. The escape of the captive and the groans of his companion set him wild. He drew his revolver and running to the water's edge fired at the receding boat.

A mocking laugh and the echo of his weapon came back to his ears.

Not until Little Foxfire had spoken to Gypsy did she realize the situation, and that he was actually present.

"Oh, Foxfire!" she cried, "you brave little man; can it be possible that you have saved me again?"

"It's a solemn, sober fact, Miss Gypsy," the youth replied, in a tone of manly pride, "and I hope I may never have to do so again."

"Oh! I knew God would help me! He sent you to rescue me, as I prayed that He would."

"That's it, Gypsy; a gal's prayers and a boy's pluck never fail to win. But I expect I started a landslide that smashed the life out o' that sleepin' outlaw. I never liked the idea of killin' a foe in his sleep, but in this case I think the end justified the means. But I don't care now, for I expect they've treated you mean—Zip! ha! ha! bang away, you gal thief, you can't hurt a Christian!"

The boat soon shot into the shadows of the opposite shore and touched the bank, when the fugitives quickly landed.

Then removing the blankets from the craft and concealing them in the bushes, Little Foxfire shouldered the captured rifle and with his fair little protegee hurried back into the timber through fear that other dangers might be lurking along the shore.

When they reached the edge of the timber they sat down to rest, when Foxfire asked:

"What on earth does this mean, Gypsy—you're being a captive here?"

"I really don't know, Foxfire," the maiden replied. "The first night after you folks left Leadville, I stepped out of the back door shortly after dark to feed my pet deer, Fanny, when a man sprung from the shadows of the building, threw a blanket over my head and shoulders, and ran with me to where a man on horseback was waiting. The horseman took me in his arms, and galloped away into the hills, and wandered around and around all night—oh! I don't know where, Foxfire, for I was unconscious half the time."

"The next day I was placed in a covered wagon drawn by two mules, and carried away, traveling both day and night, with a short stop now and then to feed the animals. We met nobody, for we followed no road or trail; and it was just this morning that we took the boat."

"Who the men are I know not; and why they are taking me away, and where to, I know not. They talked kind to me, and tried to be kind to me, so far as words and acts were concerned. But they were not kind in taking me away by force, and I knew by that they were bad men."

"Of course they are, Gypsy—they're villains of the first order; but if one o' them ever gits out of the Arkansaw valley again, he'll go on a blanket."

"Then that is the Arkansas river, is it, Foxfire?"

"Yes, ma'am; and old Caleb Arbuckle and Dr. Dumont are scattered 'round here somewhere—don't know exactly where, but we'll find 'em to-morrow, if not to-night yet. I tell you I had an awful ride to-day, Gypsy, to git away from a gang of Indians. But, after all, I see now that the Lord had something to do with it, for it finally led to your rescue. Glad I got me another gun, too, for I was clean out of

fools. I see it's a Winchester, and the magazine's full to the muzzle.

"Oh, smoky ruins! if we could only find Old Caleb and the doctor now. Wouldn't they open their eyes and ponder at seein' you down here, three hundred miles from home? But, Gypsy, I s'pects we'd better be movin' along, and find the boys, if we can. I'm sure now they are down the river, or they and your captors would 'a' collided as you came down, if they were above."

"I am ready to follow you, Foxfire, wherever you may lead; for I am not afraid of anybody now. Oh! I do hope I will get to see the place where papa died. But my poor, dear mother! how she will mourn, I know, over my absence."

With a proudly beating heart, the young spy drew Gypsy's arm within his own, and then they set off down the river.

They kept within the shadows of the woods, and as they advanced they finally discovered a light ahead of them, and, feeling satisfied that it was the camp-fire of their friends, Dumont and Arbuckle, they shaped their course toward it.

CHAPTER VIII.

MEETING AS FOES—GREETING AS FRIENDS.

AFTER Foxfire had left them, Dumont and Caleb Arbuckle rode over to the river, and dismounting in a motte of timber, unsaddled and unpacked their animals, tethered them to grass, and made all other necessary arrangements for the night.

They had been there but a few minutes when they were startled by the far-off yell of Indians, and looking away in the direction whence the sound came, they discovered a number of savages in pursuit of a horseman.

Taking up his glass, Dumont closely scanned both pursuers and pursued for several moments.

"I'll declare, Arbuckle," he at length said, "if Foxfire had not left us on foot, I'd swear that fugitive were the boy. Here, take a look!"

The old detective took the glass and brought it to bear on the pursued horseman.

"By the Toledo blade o' Gideon!" he exclaimed, "it is the boy! He's on a black pony without bridle or saddle—bet a dollar and forty seven cents he stole it from the red-skins."

"The little dare-devil! what does he mean?"

"Seems as though he meant to have a race, and's havin' it, too, with the chances in his favor."

"Yes," answered Dumont who had again taken the glass, "he made a good selection, for he is undoubtedly gaining on the savages. But I say, Arbuckle, it begins to look to me now as though we were to have a bit of trouble before we got through in the Arkansas valley."

"I wonder if the Jayne-Miles tragedy's to be re-enacted?" questioned Old Caleb.

"Time alone will tell."

Keeping under cover of the timber, the two men watched the race with breathless interest.

The racers were some two miles away headed toward the river.

Dumont and Arbuckle were in a quandary as to what they should do. To venture out to his assistance would be suicidal in the face of such odds; and since the boy appeared in a fair way to distance them in the race, they concluded it would be best for them to remain where they were, and be ready to receive the Indians when they came up, as they had not a doubt but that the boy would eventually lead them around that way.

But to their surprise, the boy and the Indians disappeared behind a cluster of trees, nor did they appear in sight again. They waited and watched with anxiously beating hearts. An hour went by, when to their horror, they saw the Indians ride out from behind the grove, and go galloping back across the valley. Dumont carefully scrutinized the party with his glass, and, although he could see nothing of Foxfire among them, he felt none the less fearful of his having been slain.

"I'm afraid, colonel," the doctor said, seriously, "that our little hero and guide has met with his fate."

"Too bad if so, doctor," replied Arbuckle, "but with the advantage the boy had when we last saw him, I can't think he's gone under."

"I hope not—I pray not, colonel; but in view of the fact that we are in great danger, had we not better arrange some kind of a defense?"

"We've a spade with us, doctor, and by diggin' a rifle-pit I think we'll be in good shape to lick a dozen or two red-skins, though I'm not goin' to invite them to a battle."

With the spade the two, taking turns at the work, proceeded to dig a rifle-pit. They labored industriously for some hours and when

their work was done they removed their effects into the pit and secreted their horses in a dense plum thicket.

By this time it was sundown and with the shadows of night the gloom of a dreadful foreboding settled upon the minds of the two men. They could not dispel the thought that Little Foxfire was in trouble and that their help was sorely needed; and so it was finally decided that Arbuckle go out in search of the boy while Dumont remained to watch the camp.

As soon as the moon came up the old detective set off up the river on foot. He carried no weapon but his revolver. To him a rifle was a "cumbersome, awkward tool."

With rapid strides he pushed on some two or three miles when he stopped to listen. But all was quiet. He walked on until he was beyond, he thought, the point where the boy must have struck the river. Then he turned and crept down to the water's edge and again listened. Still all was silent save the gentle flow of the water. He looked up and down the stream. Half-hidden in the shadow of some overhanging boughs he saw a long, log canoe lying close against the bank. He advanced closer to the craft and examined it. It contained a single paddle, and whether it had been left there or had drifted there he could not tell. But be that as it might, he resolved to take possession of the craft and paddle back to camp. It might stand them in need should they be attacked by the savages.

Stepping down the bank he entered the craft, seated himself, took up the paddle and swung the boat around. But the craft being longer than he supposed its prow in swinging around became fouled in some drooping vines and brought to a stand close alongside the bank. This threw the old detective into the shadow of the overhanging boughs, which he regarded as a fortunate mishap for the next instant he heard the tramp of approaching feet.

Sitting motionless he listened. Some one was advancing with stealthy footsteps along the bank. The sound came nearer and nearer and finally ceased near the prow of the canoe. The next moment Old Caleb was violently shaken by the unknown leaping into the opposite end of the boat.

The detective drew his revolver, and was in the act of demanding who the intruder was when the agitated boat swung out from the shore into the moonlit waters.

But no sooner had it done so than the unknown's body was covered by the revolver of the old mountaineer, who hissed out:

"One word or one movement and you're dead!"

The stranger gave a sort of a gasp and his form became as rigid as stone.

And as the boat drifted out still further into the moonlight the two sat motionless, glaring into each other's eyes.

It was a double surprise, but Old Arbuckle had got the drop on the intruder. But his advantage was only momentary, for, quick as the lightning leaps from the storm-cloud, the long arm of the stranger swept around and Arbuckle's revolver was knocked from his hand half across the river.

Then, with a snarl like that of a tiger the man dashed at the throat of the old detective, but the latter was as quick, and when they came together both were on their feet.

With their left hands they grasped at each other's throats, while with their right fists they began to deal each other lusty blows in the face. Their tall forms swaying so violently set the boat to rocking and the next moment the craft upset and both men fell into the river.

But this did not end the struggle. They rose to the surface still fighting. The water was over their heads in depth and they soon went down again. But when they arose the second time they were parted, and before they could come together again the upturned canoe drifted between them. Each laid a hand upon the boat while with the other he reached for the throat of his foe. A hand of each became fastened on the collar of the other, and thus locked together over the slippery bottom of the canoe, the struggle was renewed with desperate ferocity. With the right hand they struck furiously at each other's face and head, though the rocking of the boat made their forms unsteady and their blows uncertain.

Arbuckle, in the mean time, had discovered that his foe was a white man, and no mean antagonist, for he was giving him all he could well stand.

"Cuss your picters!" the old detective finally sputtered out, as he managed to get in a square lick, "I'll fix you!"

"Oh, ye will, eh?" retorted the other, and by an over-stroke gave Old Caleb a resounding whack on the head.

Thus blow after blow was given, though at such a disadvantage, that little real injury was inflicted upon either. With their arms resting across the canoe they were kept from sinking, and for awhile it seemed that the result of the contest must be in favor of the one possessing the greatest endurance. But, suddenly, Arbuckle managed to get a pretty fair blow at his antagonist, when he again hissed out:

"You'll spout wuss nor that, you cachalet, before you are done with, Cale Arbuckle."

As the old detective pronounced his name, the other released his hold, and dodging another blow, exclaimed:

"You, Arbuckle! Cale Arbuckle!"

"Yes, you prowlin' assassin—didn't know you were right in the clutches of a prowlin' walrus—an octopus, did ye?"

"Caleb Arbuckle, you're a blasted old fool!" blurted the other, "for I'm Mustang Sam, the hoss-hunter!"

"What?"

"It's a fact, you're an idiot!"

Arbuckle released his hold upon the collar of his foe, and then the two panting men rested their hands upon the drifting boat and glared across into each other's faces, the very pictures of idiotic ridiculousness.

They had no difficulty now in recognizing each other, although they had not met for two years. They were old-time friends, and would have suffered death rather than struck each other in anger.

Arbuckle was the first to break the silence that followed the recognition.

"You're a monumental old ass, Sam!" he declared.

"And you, colonel, are a splay-hoofed pyramidal jackass."

"Shake, old wild-hoss! God bless you!"

"Amen, old Shackles!"

And as the two clasped hands over the upturned boat, they laughed like a pair of school-boys over their ridiculous blunder.

Finally they turned the canoe over, assisted each other into it, and again shook hands, and had another hearty laugh over their mistake.

"For the Lord's sake, Sam, don't mention this to a livin' soul," pleaded Caleb. "The idea of a detective and a famous horse hunter pummelin' each other for an hour before findin' out they were friends, is disgraceful enough to send you, Sam, over to Mexico. But what war you snookin' 'round here for, anyhow?"

"Why, you pesky old bone-rack, I'd just passed by this canoe and seen it empty. Five minutes later I was back lookin' into the muzzle o' your revolver. But what are you doin' here, Caleb? On a trail?"

"I'm up here lookin' for a red-headed boy."

"Who? Little Foxfire?"

"Yes; know anything about him?"

Sam narrated, briefly as possible, his and Little Foxfire's adventures with the wild horse and the savages.

"Well, I'll swear by the prophets, that boy's a regular terror; but where can he be now? But, Samuel, I'm glad I met 'ith you. Doc Dumont's down the creek a ways, and he's been a-wishin' for the last three days that he could meet you."

"Great gumption! Doc Dumont out here?" exclaimed the mustanger. "The young scamp! I'll bet he's out here lookin' up the secret o' that golden locket that I heard tell he found."

"That's jist what he's doin', Old Lasso."

"By thunder in the valley, let's be off. I want to see him and press his hand, for he's got a heart in him, Cale, bigger nor an ox's, as I well know from 'sperience. I don't believe you can do anything to'rds finding that young hurricane before daylight, though he may find you. In fact, you might find him at camp when you got back."

With their hands they paddled the canoe a-bore and were soon moving down the river.

Before they had gone a mile, they, too, saw a light in the woods ahead of them.

"What's the meanin'?" asked Old Caleb.

"Surely Dumont wasn't gump-head enough to strike a fire to invite all the Ingins in this valley to lift his skulp? But I'll swear, I believe it is in or near our camp."

"To make sure of the situation, let's steal along a leetle zephyrish, colonel, for I've had 'sperience enough with the red-skins to-day to do me a lifetime. I got cleaned outen hoss, carbine, pistol—everything but breath and I had to wrassel for that jist 'bout as lively as you ever see'd a lover o' horse-hoofs. But say, Buckle, what on yearth's brought these lam-

basted red-skins into the valley again all to once—without warnin'! I hav'n't heard o' any threatened outbreak, and I've been circulatin' all around the kentry with eyes and ears open. D'ye think it's a genuine outbreak, or jist a spasmodic spurt o' a gang o' fractious young bucks on a sort o' a scalp-knife bender?"

"Can't say, Sam, what it does mean, for sure, but they seem to be on the fight."

Thus they conversed until they came within a few hundred paces of the light, which they saw was from a camp-fire, and around which they could see shadowy forms moving.

"I'll swear I believe it's in our camp," declared Arbuckle; "and yit we want to make sure."

With the silence of shadows they crawled along behind a cluster of bushes to within twenty paces of the fire, and, on looking through at the light then, they started with horror at the sight that met their vision—the sounds that greeted their ears.

To an immense tree stood Dr. Fred, tied hand and foot—his body bared to the waist—while before him stood eight or ten Indian warriors, painted and plumed, and each with a drawn tomahawk in his hand. Around the head of the captive—the points driven deep into the tree, was a circle of long, glittering knives, the keen edge of one of which pressed so close against the doctor's temple that drops of blood were trickling down his cheek and falling upon his white breast.

CHAPTER IX.

STRUCK BY A WHIRLWIND.

FOR a moment Old Sam and Old Caleb stood motionless—rooted to the spot, it seemed, by the sight before them.

Among the savages they saw a white man disguised, who took no part in the torture of the captive, but looked on with evident delight.

The red-skins were all impulsive young warriors, bloodthirsty and fiendish. How long they had been indulging in their devilish amusement of hurling their knives and tomahawks into the tree around Dumont's head the watchers could not tell. They saw, however, that the captive was cool and undaunted and faced them with a fearless look that seemed to defy them to do their very worst.

Leaving the knives bristling around the captive's head, the savages had stepped back to vary the amusement by throwing their tomahawks.

Fred Dumont's face grew a shade paler, but there was no flinching when the first weapon struck with a thud within an inch of his face. Another warrior stepped to the score, and, with wonderful precision, sent his hatchet so close that the captive felt the wind of the weapon on his cheek.

Another and another was thrown until seven tomahawks, alongside of seven knives, were sticking in the tree—the tomahawks just outside of the knives.

Elated by their remarkable skill the savages were advancing to secure their weapons to repeat the exercise when a groan suddenly startled them. It came from out in the darkness behind them, and involuntarily every red-skin turned his face in that direction.

Another groan, then a huge hand reached quickly around the big tree-trunk to which Dumont was bound, seized and withdrew one of the knives sticking in the tree. The next instant the prisoner's bonds fell at his feet and he stood a free man!

But before he could fully realize the fact, a rifle in the darkness rung out and the savage nearest to him fell dead in his tracks.

A yell of wild, demoniac fury rose on the night and the red-skins sprung for their tomahawks. But to their horror they found themselves confronted by Mustang Sam and Dumont with uplifted tomahawks.

At the same moment Old Caleb Arbuckle, with the roar of a wild bull, rushed from his concealment on the opposite side, and snatching a club—one end of which was ablaze—from the fire as he came, he fell upon the savages and dealt them unmerciful blows right and left.

"Hoo-raw!" yelled the old mountaineer; "into them over there, Old Lasso! Chop them—carve them, Pill-bags! Scatter their brains—all over—Colera—do—o—o!"

To still add to the fury of the whirlwind that had struck the unsuspecting savages, Little Foxfire suddenly glided from the shadows and joined in the conflict. At sight of him Old Caleb Arbuckle became so elated with joy that his yells might have been heard twenty miles.

So completely were the red-skins taken by

surprise, and that, at a time when their tomahawks—their favorite weapon in a close encounter—were out of their possession, that they could only act on the defensive by dodging the blows of their enemies and breaking for the shadows at the first opportunity.

But, all did not escape, for four of their number fell dead within ten feet of each other.

A yell that fairly rent the sky burst from the lips of Old Arbuckle and Mustang Sam.

"By heavens, Saw-bones!" the mustanger finally said, as he advanced to where Dumont stood—his brain almost dizzy with the terrors and excitements of the past hour, "how do you do, old pard?"

"I'm better than I was, Sam," replied Dumont with a faint smile; "that I can assure, my dear old comrade!"

"I should say so, boy, but I'm glad to meet you again, God bless you."

"Boys!" cried Caleb Arbuckle, looking around him in surprise, "where's Little Foxfire?"

"Gone after an Ingin, I reckon," suggested Old Sam.

No one had seen the boy leave, but in the midst of their excitement over his disappearance the boy returned, leading into camp, Gypsy Jayne!

"Great heavens!" cried young Dumont. "Sword of Gideon!" from Old Arbuckle.

The three men stood like dumb statues gazing upon the boy and girl before them.

"My God, Gyp-y! what has brought you here?" Dumont finally found speech to inquire.

"Oh, Dr. Dumont!" the maiden replied, as she gazed up into his white, blood-stained face, "I have had such a dreadful adventure since you left Leadville! I was carried away by bad men and I am afraid it will kill mother."

"My dear girl, come and sit down," said the doctor tenderly; "you are excited and nervous. Foxfire, will you look about our horses, my noble lad? We left them in the thicket down toward the river."

"Doctor," observed Old Mustang, "you are not an Injun-fighter, I see. You forget we are in great danger here. We had better change our quarters and that 'mediately, for the savages may return with help; besides, them dead ones are not for a gal to look upon."

"You are right, Sam," replied Dumont. "I must confess that I have passed through such an ordeal within the last hour that my senses seem deserting me. Let us move at once."

To bring up their horses and load their effects upon them was the work of but a few minutes, and then all started off down the river.

About a mile from their old camp they again halted in a little chaparral.

Old Sam now volunteered to stand guard, he having armed himself with the best of the dead Indians' weapons.

Then the other four sat down, and entered into conversation.

Gypsy told the story of her abduction, and all the incidents connected therewith, up to the time of her rescue by the gallant Little Foxfire.

"Caleb," said Dumont, when she had concluded, "I am afraid we will be outgeneraled yet by—by somebody."

"Jist say by Dan Mar'el," suggested Old Caleb; "for, by thunder and gumption! I'll bet he's at the bottom of the gal's abduction, if not the movin' spirit in this Injin deviltry. I am beginnin' to think Helen's note may have put him on his guard, and that he, too, has had a boy-spy at work, and got at the hull of our scheme. I tell you the major's as deep as we dare be, and 's a cussed sight meaner."

"There's a leak somewhere, colonel," observed Dumont, "and if Martelle should find out the object of our mission 'down here, and secure those buried papers, we would be badly left. There's something wrong somewhere, but where it is I can't conceive, for the life of me. And it is also very true that if Martelle could command the assistance of the Indians in a scheme of murderous villainy three years ago, he can do the same to-day."

"Well, if they crowd us, Doc, paralyze my liver if we don't strew this valley with death and destruction, now mind what—"

He did not finish the sentence, for the spiteful crack of a rifle stung through the night, and was followed by an unearthly scream out in the chaparral.

CHAPTER X.

TWO VILLAINS PLOTTING.

WE will now return, for a brief space of time, to Leadville, that we may watch the movements of Major Dan Martelle, whose suspicions and fears had been so aroused by the letter re-

ceived from Helen Jayne, and the visit of Jerrold Tweed; for he had, from the moment the latter called at his office, mistrusted his old-time friend whom he had supposed safe in prison for twenty years, if not for life, as having furnished the Jayne family a clew to Mahlon's death with the intention of extracting blood-money from him.

The first thing the major did after locking his office-door on the Boy Spy was to put a detective on the track of Tweed, while he himself shadowed the Jayne family, and watched every movement around their house.

From the unguarded conversation between Little Foxfire and Gypsy Jayne, which he had overheard in passing by, he learned that Dr. Fred Dumont was the leading spirit in the proposed investigation of the mysterious disappearance and death of Mahlon Jayne.

He also mistrusted, after a glance into the doctor's office that same night, that Old Caleb Arbuckle and Little Foxfire were assisting him, and this made him all the more uneasy.

About midnight that same night he had a conference with the detective he had sent to watch Tweed, and from the latter's movements he became satisfied that he had accused him wrongfully of having furnished the clew to Jayne's death. But in the mean time he had learned that Jerrold had lied to him about his escape from prison, for in a Denver paper he read that night of the desperado, Jerrold Tweed, having killed a guard and escaped from custody, and that a reward of one thousand dollars was offered for his apprehension and return to prison.

This discovery furnished him some relief, so far as Jerrold was concerned, but it left him still deeper in mystery as to how that clew to Jayne's murder had been found.

The detective was next sent to shadow Dr. Dumont and his party, and when he met the major the next morning he had some information for that worthy that caused him to turn pale.

At sharp four o'clock the next day Jerrold Tweed, in disguise, made his appearance, as per agreement, at the major's office.

"Thunder, Jerrold!" Martelle exclaimed, as he closed the door. "I'd given a thousand dollars if you'd come around this morning."

"Why, my dear major, what's up?" replied Tweed, blandly; "did you get in a wild hurry to accept my proposition?"

"Proposition, the devil! Jerrold, why did you lie to me yesterday?"

"What about?"

"Your being pardoned out of prison. Listen to this."

The major took up the Denver paper, and in slow and deliberate tones read the account of Jerrold Tweed's escape and the reward offered for his arrest.

Tweed whistled an exclamation of surprise.

"That's what you lied about," the major went on, "when a life sentence or a hempen rope is staring you squarely in the face! What am I to understand by it?"

"Well, after all," Tweed argued with remarkable indifference, "I'm not much worse than some others, major, and if you'd 'a' shelled out last night I'd been in Japan before this."

"You want to get away from here in a hurry, if you get away at all," in a tone that implied a threat.

"I'll never do it 'less I go with the collaterals to start in business with elsewhere," was the firm response.

"That you shall have on one condition."

"Major, I don't propose to load myself down with promises; but you can name your condition."

"Take that girl, Gypsy Jayne, with you."

"Oh-ah! that's not so bad. But what's in the wind now?"

"Nothing; only I want an excuse to get away from Leadville for a week or two at least. It concerns you, too, that I want to go. Last night I learned that one Dr. Dumont, accompanied by the old Mountain Detective, Caleb Arbuckle, and Little Foxfire, starts soon for the Arkansas valley in search of some record left there that gives an account—a history—of Jayne's massacre and other facts connected therewith. If they find such a history it must never come to the light of a court of justice."

"Why need you be so uneasy, major? The Ingins killed the men," remarked Tweed, with a facetious grin.

"I have learned that my name has been connected with the deed in instigating the Indians to the murder."

"How in Satan's name could such an impression get out?"

"To be honest, I first mistrusted you were at

the bottom of furnishing the clew, for a clew they have undoubtedly got hold of; but I confess now I wronged you."

"I should say you did, major; but, meebby some of the Indians have been converted and made a clean breast of the whole affair?"

"Not an Indian save the chief, Black Owl, ever knew the truth of that affair, and he was killed, you remember, in the attack on the miners. No, sir, it surpasses my comprehension how, after three years, this matter comes to light with but a few links in the whole chain of truth missing. It's a mystery."

"Well, it is gold-danged queer, major; but, what's all this got to do with that girl?" reminded Tweed.

"You want her—you said as much yesterday," continued the scheming villain, "and I will help you to get her. Her disappearance 'll cause a great commotion, of course, for everybody worships the little wildfire. I will arrange it so that the Vigilants will get onto the wrong track while you can take the girl and flee down the Arkansas river. You see then I will have an ample excuse to leave camp; I will go in search of the girl. For me to leave here now without an excuse of the kind might prove fatal. Moreover, I want to prove to Mrs. Jayne that I am her devoted, self-sacrificing friend, as I was her husband's. I will ride straight for the far-off Indian village, and by the time Dumont and his companions get into the valley I'll have a hundred Indians there to meet them. If there is any damaging records there I want Dumont to get possession of them, then I'll take possession of the whole outfit and dump them into the river. I have a brave and shrewd friend who will assist you with your charge. You will proceed down the Arkansas river, keeping back among the hills, and on or about the fifteenth of the month I will meet you at Old White Chalk, our old rendezvous which you doubtless remember. I will then and there place in your hands the sum of money you have asked. And I would further say that, if I do not keep my word like a man, you can return, expose me and make what you can out of it."

"What good would that do now, major?" Tweed replied. "You could brand me as a liar and blackmailer—swear that the Red Rock was your original claim, and that you never had done so rascally a thing as to change the records that gave you the richest mine in these hills—expose me as a fugitive from justice and send me back to the penitentiary to rot. Then, who'd believe the desperado, Jerrold Tweed? Who'd dispute the rich, influential proprietor of the Red Rock, Major Dan Martelle?"

"Jerrold, you are too suspicious."

"No, I'm not, but see just how things are. You're rich and all-powerful, and I'm a hunted convict—yes, hunted like a wolf instead of living here your partner, and hearing the name of Martelle and Tweed mentioned with honor as the proprietors of the Red Rock."

"And it would have been us, Jerrold, had you not in a drunken spree killed Alf Bonny, and made yourself a criminal," replied Martelle.

"Well, ain't I, in fact, a partner in the Red Rock?"

"Jerrold, you know you could never be a partner in the Red Rock now."

"I could be a silent partner, couldn't I?—like Mahlon Jayne for instance," and the man grinned maliciously.

"Tweed, your jests are severe; and now if you escape the penitentiary for life—if not the halter—take my advice, accept my proposition, and get out of the country—go down to Old Mexico—that will suit you, I know. I will give you sufficient to start in business, and, if I can get that Mahlon Jayne mystery in an unsolvable shape, I'll agree to send you one thousand a year as long as I own the Red Rock. But I want that excuse to leave the camp—no other will do at this time—to search for Gypsy Jayne; so now I want to know what you'll do."

"But suppose I should be caught in abducting her, what then, major?" and Tweed arched his eyebrows.

"No danger if you and Budd will follow, to the letter, my already matured plans. Remember I shall lead the pursuers off into the hills, and all you'll have to do will be to make your way to Old White Chalk on the river to await my coming."

"Major, you are playing a desperate game."

"I'm in a desperate strait, Jerrold, and I don't propose to be defeated now, come weal or woe."

"Well," Tweed finally said, "I don't see as I can do better than to accept your propositions

for I can't stay in this country much longer. The gal part's all I don't like, although I'm in love with the little spitfire; but she'll be an incumbrance to a rapid flight. But if I'm caught, major, with her in my power and you don't use your influence and power—physical, social, financial and legal to get me out of trouble, I'll see that you bear your part in the matter."

"Jerrold, I believe you think I'm trying to deceive you—get you into a trap to get rid of you. But you are mistaken. If I wanted to do that, I'd shoot you and tell the world I did it in trying to capture you—you the escaped convict, and the world would believe me. Why, man, if I could I would gladly remove the criminal stain from your name and take you into full fellowship as of yore."

"Dang it, my hands are no worse than other's with the stains of blood; but I was unfortunate in not getting mine washed off sooner."

"Well, there's no need of rehearsing this subject again. If we're going to do anything, we must come to an understanding at once," said the major impatiently.

"Give me one thousand dollars down, major, to meet present needs and I'm your man."

"I'll do so," and Martelle proceeded to count the money and pay it over.

Having thus settled the matter between them, the mine proprietor made known his plans for the abduction of Gypsy Jayne, and how well and successfully they were carried out the reader already knows.

Few men that afternoon who looked with envy upon the handsome owner of the Red Rock, or received his smiles, nods of the head, or compliments of the day as an especial honor, dreamed of the damnable villainy that he was plotting and planning.

And then that night, after Gypsy's abduction, when the camp was running wild with excitement—when oaths of eternal vengeance hung upon every lip, none ever suspected that Major Martelle—the foremost in the search—the loudest in his denunciation of the crime against the Idol of the Camp—was the real author of the whole affair.

And furthermore, when he went to the home of the weeping, distracted widow and her daughter, and to them declared he would never cease in his searching among the hills until Gypsy was safe at home, he filled their breasts with admiration of his gallantry, and dispelled from their minds the suspicions that had previously been fixed upon them by the secret of the golden locket; and when, under the darkness of night he rode away, it was with the blessings of the mother and daughter—the one of whom he had robbed of a husband and child—the other a father and sister.

CHAPTER XI.

THE YOUNG SPY AND THE SKUNK.

STARTLED by the report of the firearms and that unearthly scream within a few rods of camp, Dumont, Arbuckle and Little Foxfire were upon their feet in a moment.

"What in the name of Heaven does that mean?" asked the young doctor.

"All right, folkses!" came the voice of Old Mustang from the shadows; "it's nothin' but a cussed wild-cat that undertook to stare me out o' countenance with its green fiery eyes, and I put a bullet atwixt them; that's all."

Chuckling to himself Caleb resumed his seat, saying:

"Hope it won't call the Ingins out to-night again."

But the remainder of that eventful night was passed without further troubles, and early next morning they broke camp and continued on down the valley determined to accomplish their mission in spite of the marauding red-skins.

It is true they realized in the fullest sense their great dangers, and the responsibility resting upon them since Gypsy had become one of their party.

They rode out into the open valley where there could be no danger of ambushed foes.

Little Foxfire and Old Mustang mounted on one of the pack-horses, rode a short distance in advance, the young spy keeping a sharp lookout for the blow-out they were in search of, while the old horse-hunter gave his attention to the safety of the party in general.

Thus they continued on slowly and almost hopelessly.

At noon they encamped for dinner on a little watercourse about two miles from the Arkansas. While there, the keen eye of Foxfire discovered an Indian skulking in the timber bordering the river, evidently watching their movements.

This again aroused the fears of the party, and Dumont said:

"We must move cautiously if we move at all."

"I think we'd better stop here till we find out what's before us, folks," suggested Mustang Sam.

To this all readily agreed and the horses were unsaddled and tied out to grass.

The afternoon wore slowly away. Not the sign of an Indian was seen again.

At length night settled over the valley, when Little Foxfire set off to reconnoiter the grove where the savage had been seen during the day.

He crossed the valley to the river and then turning moved down the stream.

After traveling another mile or so, he suddenly came in sight of a light a short distance before him. It seemed to be the light of a camp-fire burning in a low place in the ground, and creeping closer, he found this was the case. In the center of a sink-hole or dry basin thirty feet across and fully fifteen in depth, burned a camp-fire in whose glow the young spy saw at least two-score of painted and plumed Indian warriors.

Around the edge of the basin grew a dense border of willows, and spanning it from side to side, directly over the center, was an immense cottonwood tree that had been laid prostrate there by the storm.

Concealing himself among the roots of the fallen tree, the young spy peered through the fringe of willows upon the dusky warriors. To his surprise he discovered a white man in their midst, and judging from the commotion his presence excited, he had but just arrived, and the lad was completely astounded when he discovered that that man was Major Daniel Martelle.

"Smoky ruins!" the youth exclaimed to himself, "that man is in cahoots with them bloody Ingins! Peter's ghost! I've a notion to take a shot at him, I declare I have. The scoundrel's excited—he's just arrived, and, Moses! how I would like to hear what he has to say! I believe I'll try and get closer—crawl out on that big log right over them."

So musing, he laid aside his rifle and cap, and climbing onto the log where it lay in the shadows, he began crawling on his hands and knees out over the sink-hole.

The fire burned almost directly under the log and all there was to conceal him from view was the darkness of the log's own shadow on the upper side. But so eager was the lad to learn the object of Martelle's visit there that a knowledge of the danger he would be in should he be discovered did not deter him from his purpose.

Like a cat stealing through the grass upon a bird, he moved along the log. He was aware of the fact that even the fall of a piece of bark might expose him, and so the silence and care he was compelled to observe taxed every nerve and muscle.

One thing that favored him more than all others was the deep interest centered in the august presence of Dan Martelle by the savages.

It was fully five minutes before the youth had gained the position desired, but when he did he laid face downward flat upon the log with his fingers locked over the back of his head so as to support his arms.

He was now directly over the Indians—not over fifteen feet separating them. He could hear them talking about, and their conversation was quite audible.

The chief whom Martelle addressed as Crow Dog was speaking in excited tones and bad English. He was lamenting the death of his warriors in the conflict on the previous night, and reciting the events connected therewith.

Foxfire was really glad when the savage had finished his excited, disjointed story, and he heard Martelle ask:

"Why did Crow Dog let his warriors attack the whites? Did you not promise me they should not until the white men turned and started back up the valley?"

"He did, but his young warriors are thirsting for the blood of the pale-faces," the chief was heard to respond, "and when they went out on a scout and found the pale-face camp, their senses deserted them."

"Let Crow Dog remember that they are desperate fighters, and will whip thunder out of four times their number," returned Martelle in a tone that told he was provoked.

"Crow Dog has held his warriors in camp to-day waiting for the white captain's coming."

"I was detained up the river, or I would have been here sooner," replied the major. "But have you seen those pale-faces to-day, chief?"

"Yes. They are now camped off yonder in the valley."

"How many of them?"

"Five—four braves, one squaw."

"The devil you say! Then it is as I have feared." The last sentence was addressed more to himself than the savage.

A momentary silence followed; then the villain inquired:

"Are they moving up the river or down, chief?"

"They were moving down the valley."

"Then, by Heavens! I'll stake my life the record, or the history, or whatever they are searching for, was left in that blow-out where Jayne was killed. Why didn't I think of that before? But the blow-out is not over four miles from here, if I remember rightly, and in the morning I will run over there and see what I can find."

Little Foxfire's heart gave a great leap. Already he felt repaid in what he had heard for the dangers he had risked, although he was not out of that danger yet. To find the blow-out, if within four miles of there, as Martelle had said it was, would be a matter of no further difficulty. In fact, he felt that his greatest trouble would be in getting off that log, for he would have to creep backward—not being sure that he could get off at all without a dangerous leap by going ahead.

The lad did not expect to hear anything that would be of more interest than he had already heard, and so he lay waiting and watching for a chance to begin a retreat.

The camp-fire beneath had died down until

nothing but a heap of red coals gave light to the surrounding.

While waiting a favorable moment to act, Foxfire was suddenly startled by a slight sound as if of some soft-footed animal walking upon the log he was on. He dare not raise his head to look along the tree, but he listened more intently. The sound—the merest vibratory sound—was coming closer. Was it a wild-cat? or a panther stealing along the log on its velvet feet?

As these questions revolved through the young spy's mind something touched his head. Then he heard a snuffling around him, and the next moment the animal, whatever kind it was, placed its fore paws upon his head, and began softly patting it, first with one foot, then the other.

By this Foxfire knew what the animal was—a skunk! Full many a time as he lay wrapped in his blanket under some sheltering tree or ledge, or by the side of a camp-fire asleep, had he been awakened by these pestiferous animals walking over him, or patting him in their peculiar way. He knew that so long as he remained quiet he was in no danger of its terrible weapon of defense, but it was torturing to him to have to lay there with the animal thrusting its nose into his face and sniffing and patting around. His quick mind, however, was never at a loss for an expedient, and he soon resolved to rid himself of the skunk. Acting upon this resolution, he swung his hand quickly around, and gave the animal a vigorous blow, that knocked it from the log down into the very midst of the savages.

The presence of the animal created almost a panic among the red-skins who started back with cries of disgust, while up on the air into high heaven rose an odor that fairly sickened the little hero lying upon the big log. In fact, it soon became more than his olfactory could stand, and rising to his feet while the savages were still in commotion over the sudden appearance of their odoriferous visitor, he darted along the log and leaped out into the shadows.

A savage yell pealed out from the sink-hole. The lynx-eyed warriors had seen the boy, and instantly they swarmed out of the "hole" like wolves, and darted away after him.

But as well might they have pursued the cunning fox as that lithe-limbed, swift-footed boy; but this they soon learned for the second time, for in a few minutes they all returned with disappointment written on their sullen faces.

Little Foxfire made his way back to his friends, who were eagerly and anxiously awaiting him since they had heard the distant yells of the red-skins. The lad was in high spirits, and seating himself he narrated his adventures at the Indian bivouac, the discover of Dan Martelle among the Indians, and what he had heard.

Doctor Dumont could scarcely restrain his emotions aroused by the boy's story. He could not find language to express his feelings toward the treacherous, murdering Martelle.

All were completely at a loss to know how the villain had ever learned that they were in the Arkansas valley in search of evidence to convict him of a dark, and foul crime; but since he did not know their mission there, and seemed to even surmise that the blow-out where Jayne died was their objective point, it behooved the doctor and his friends to act speedily.

So after some discussion, Little Foxfire, accompanied by Old Caleb Arbuckle, was sent down the valley to search for the blow-out, and if they should find it, then all would move to the coveted spot.

Dumont and Mustang Sam kept a close watch over camp and the fair little Gypsy, who lay sleeping soundly on a couch of grass and blankets, under the arching boughs of a great cottonwood.

Scarcely an hour had passed when the scouts returned to camp flushed with joyful excitement.

"We found the blow-out, folks!" announced Little Foxfire.

"Glory! glory!" exclaimed Doctor Dumont.

"Hallalujerum! hallalujerum!" added Old Sam.

"It isn't over a mile from here," the young spy continued. "I knew it the moment I entered it. I walked into the mouth of the rift and looked up at the moon and stars, and it seemed that I could almost see those dead miners layin' there still. The place hasn't changed a whit in three years. By the smokin' ruins! we'll beat old Martelle yit, boys! We must breakfast in that blow-out."

"Then let us make for it at once," enjoined Doctor Dumont.

In a few minutes the horses were brought up, bridled, saddled and packed. The three canteens in the party were filled at the little creek, a bundle of dry twigs secured for fire, should they need one, and then all set off led by Foxfire.

A few minutes' brisk traveling sufficed to bring them to the end of their journey, and in a few minutes more they were encamped in the very retreat where three years before, Mahlon Jayne and his friend gave up their lives to the treachery of a fellow-man.

But they had been there but a few moments, when silence was enjoined upon all by Little Foxfire, who said:

"Hark! what noise was that?"

All listened. The faint trampling of hoofs fell upon their ears. Their horses tethered near, pricked up their ears and snorted with alarm.

Looking westward over the valley, they plainly saw in the moonlight, a body of horsemen riding toward them, and at a glance they knew it was Crow Dog and his warriors, led by Major Dan Martelle!

CHAPTER XII.

BATTLES FOR THE "BLOW-OUT."

"Bring in the horses, men!" cried Old Caleb, "for we're goin' to have to fight for our position."

The horses were quickly led into the blow-out and secured in the rift opening into it.

Then every man looked to his rifle, and was ready for the conflict which did not come. The savages had discovered, when some distance away, that the blow-out was occupied, and turning they rode away without a shot being fired.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Dumont, "the boss of Red Rock, like the king of France, with forty Indians, marched up the valley, and then—marched back again!"

Old Mustang and Arbuckle, by turns, stood guard the remainder of that night, Little Foxfire being permitted to lie down and rest.

By daylight the next morning they had breakfasted on cold viands, and then proceeded to strengthen their position of defense, for they mistrusted that the Indians would make an attack upon them during the day.

In the mean time Foxfire was sent to reconnoiter the canyon running back from the blow-out, to make sure that no enemy was off in that direction.

Finally Dumont took up the spade they had brought with them, saying:

"Now, boys, I'm going to begin the search for the *lost* records."

Before he had made a single movement toward it, a wild, savage yell mingled the crack! crack! crack! of rifles fell upon the ears of the party; and dropping his spade the doctor took up his rifle.

Hurrying to the top of the blow-out the party looked across the valley and beheld a white horseman flying at the top of his animal's speed, hotly pursued by a dozen savages.

"Ha!" exclaimed Old Sam, "some unfortunate devil's gettin' it as Foxfire and I got it yesterday. If he'd only come this way we could cover his escape to our defense in handsome style. I'll wave my hat to him."

Stepping out a ways the mustanger waved his hat above his head until he had the satisfaction of seeing the stranger veer his course and ride directly toward him. Then Sam turned saying:

"Now to rifles, boys, and let's show them red-skins when they come close enough that it's easier for us to hit than to miss."

With rifles in hand the three men stood ready for the "fun," and when some three hundred yards intervened between them and the red-skins they opened fire. The pony of the foremost savage fell, throwing his rider headlong to the earth from whence the latter arose in a sort of a bewildered state of mind.

Every savage quickly drew rein. The unhorsed warrior was taken on behind a comrade and the whole party turned and fled back toward the river.

The fugitive swept up to the blow-out, drew rein and dismounted in a state of great excitement—almost falling out of his saddle.

He was a man of perhaps five-and-thirty, with keen, gray eyes, and shortly-cropped brown hair. His face was covered with a short beard of but a few weeks' growth. He was dressed in a suit made up of the odds and ends of the suits of a banker and a borderman. He was armed with a rifle, knife and revolver. His animal was a pony well caparisoned. To the saddle was tied a roll containing a blanket and gum coat.

"Stranger, they made ye hump yerself, didn't they?" was Old Sam's greeting.

"Gol-dang the red pests!" the man said; "they give me goss, folks; and, if it hadn't been for you, I reckon I'd been a dead duck afore many hours. I thank you, gents."

"I war in a like boat yesterday," replied Old Sam, "and I had to paddle her alone; but I got out, with the loss of my hoss and outfit. But who might ye be, stranger?"

"Hank Luven, on my way to Leadville," was the reply.

"Wal, Mr. Luven," said Old Caleb, "make yerself to home while ye'r' with us. We hav'n't too many friends jist now."

"Thank ye," replied the man, hopping his panting horse and turning it loose to graze; "I'll be glad to stop awhile."

The man was conducted into the blow-out, and he and Dumont sat down and entered into a conversation about the Indians, whose outbreak was as great a surprise to Luven as to the doctor.

Arbuckle and Old Sam walked over to where Gypsy was seated near the mouth of the rift. The girl arose, and going close up to the old detective, said, in a whisper:

"Mr. Arbuckle, that man's voice sounds like that of one of the men who carried me a captive down the river."

The old detective was somewhat startled by the girl's words; but, after a moment's reflection, he asked:

"Wal, can't ye tell by his clothes, Gypsy? Didn't ye see the man's face?"

"Yes; but they both wore long beards and unkempt hair, and they might have been disguised," replied the maiden.

"Yes, they might—that's so; but I guess you're mistaken 'bout this man bein' one of them."

"Oh, I hope so!" replied the girl. "But I do wonder what keeps Little Foxfire? I hope he's in no trouble."

"All but that, Gypsy; don't worry 'bout that young fox gettin' caught. But precious time's bein' wasted, and I'm goin' to diggin' for that bottle myself."

Turning, the old detective took up the spade, advanced to the center of the blow-out, and sent the blade full length into the earth. Then he bore down upon the handle, raising a large lump of dirt which he pitched to one side. As he did so, a cry burst from his lips, for the dirt falling apart, revealed in

its midst a small glass bottle in which he could see a roll of dark, moldy-looking paper.

"Eureka! Eureka!" shouted the old detective, holding the bottle up to view. "Hail, holy light! Dumont, the papers are found with the first spadeful of earth. Who says the Lord ar'n't favorin' us? Now for some revelations that'll beat that o' John the Baptist!"

Dumont and Luven arose and walked over to where the detective stood, fairly dancing with glee.

Breaking the bottle on the spade-handle, Arbuckle found that the roll of papers consisted of a number of leaves that had been torn from a pocket diary. Glancing at the last one he saw written thereon the name, MAHLON JAYNE.

"Yes, sir," the detective announced; "we've found them, boys."

"Struck a windfall, boys?" asked Luven in a social tone.

"No—just some evidence that'll lead to a down-fall," replied Old Caleb, handing the papers to Dumont.

Little Gypsy clapped her hands and fairly shouted with joy.

At this juncture Little Foxfire came bounding back from up the canyon, and from the lips of Gypsy learned of the finding of the papers.

The boy tossed his cap—self improvised out of a piece of blanket—into the air and shouted with joy.

"Foxfire, you missed some fun, you brat, awhile ago," remarked Old Sam; "the Ingins chased this gentleman into our camp, and when they came a-snortin' up close enough we carefully drew a bead on them, touched the trigger and—never touched an Ingin. We killed a hoss, though, and then the roses o' the hills turned and fled. But say, Mr. Luven, this is Little Foxfire, the Boy Spy, one o' the bravest and cutest little cusses that ever raised Cain in an Ingin camp, or trailed an outlaw to his den."

Luven advanced and taking the boy's hand said:

"Glad to meet you, Foxfire, for I've heard of you before, my boy."

Foxfire started suddenly back and glanced up searchingly into the man's face; then recovering his composure, he replied:

"You're a stranger in these parts, ain't you, Mr. Luven?"

"Yes, sir; but for all that Little Foxfire's name is known hundreds of miles down the Arkansas. Yes, I've worked several years on a ranch over in Kansas, but got tired of it and concluded I'd strike for Leadville alone and unattended. But the Ingins took a notion this morning to attend me, and give me a close race."

Dumont walked to one side to look over the papers. Luven's eyes followed him with an anxious look, and finally the latter turned and walking to the top of the blow-out, took off his hat, ran his fingers through his short hair and gazed at his hopped pony in a thoughtful, meditative way.

Little Foxfire plucked Old Caleb Arbuckle aside and in a whisper said:

"By smoke, colonel, that man Luven is Jerrold Tweed, the escaped convict, and partner in crime with Dan Martelle! I recognized his voice the instant he spoke as the same feller that held the interview with Martelle in the latter's office. You know, I told you I'd recognize his voice if I should hear it distinctly even in bedlam. And I'm satisfied now that he was one of the two villains that had Gypsy in charge the other night, though he was disguised in a long beard and hair."

"Then, by the sword of Gideon! Gypsy was right," declared the old detective, "and Luven's my meat. That Ingin-chasin' affair was all a blind. See the scoundrel! He's acting queer now—no doubt givin' some signal to his friends. I'm goin' to salt him, Foxfire."

So saying the old detective turned and walked out of the blow out and up to Luven, and thrusting a deringer in his face, said:

"Jerrold Tweed, you're my prisoner!"

The man started with a sort of a gasp, his face turned pale, his eyes glared while his hand involuntarily sought his revolver at his hip.

"No use, sir; you're the man!" continued Arbuckle looking him straight in the eye. "You're little game is gauzy enough to us now."

"Sir," asserted the man, "you're barkin' up the wrong tree—you're mistaken in your man."

"No he's not," put in Little Foxfire. "You're the very fellow that was in Major Martelle's office a week or so ago. I was there, old feller, and heard that interview, if I didn't see you. And besides, you're one of the two cappies that carried Miss Gypsy here away from home, and camped with her night aforelast at Old White (halk)"

The man grew pale and black by turns as the boy stood before him, thus branding him of his sins. Guilt was plainly written upon every lineament of his features, and when he again attempted to deny the charge, the old detective stopped him, and ordered him to hold up his hands, with which order he sulkily complied.

Then Caleb disarmed him and searched his pockets. A number of rifle cartridges, a map of the territories and a pocket-knife were found.

A rope was taken from a saddle and the villain bound hand and foot. His horse was caught, brought into the blow-out and secured.

But scarcely had this been done when an exclamation burst from the lips of Little Foxfire, who pointing across the valley, said:

"Smokin' ruins! the Ingins are comin'!"

True enough, two-score savages were sweeping down toward them like the wind.

A devilish smile passed over the face of Luven, who, turning his head, hissed out:

"You will need my help now before you're done with this, gentlemen."

CHAPTER XIII.

HUNTED DOWN.

"To arms! to arms, everybody!" cried Mustang Sam, "for the tug of war is comin'!"

In a moment every man had seized his gun and stood ready for the fray that would undoubtedly settle their fate one way or the other.

"I can shoot, too!" cried Gypsy Jayne, taking up the Evans' rifle that Luven had been relieved of, and examining the magazine which she found nearly full of cartridges.

On swept the Indians, and when about three hundred yards from the blow-out every man of them threw himself forward and lay close upon his pony, face downward, while fiendish yells that seemed to come from the earth rolled over the valley.

But the whites had heard that yell before, and they stood firm and undaunted and nerved to desperation.

Waiting until the foe were within a hundred yards, Old Sam gave the word to fire, when five rifles rung out almost as one.

Three of the foremost ponies fell, and over their bodies and those of their riders others stumbled and rolled and jumped, creating an unexpected confusion in the savages' ranks, which the besieged did not hesitate to take advantage of by shooting down the enemy's horses.

The defenders were all armed with breech-loading rifles, which enabled them to keep up a steady and deadly fire. All fought with the coolness of veterans. Even the heroic little Gypsy never flinched from her post, but stood there as her father had stood on the same spot three years before, and faced the advancing foe undaunted and unmoved.

The havoc of death in the red-skins' ranks was frightful, yet with desperate courage they charged on, but when almost on the very edge of the blow-out, when some of them were so close that they could see the defenders, they turned and fled more rapid than they had advanced.

Jerrold Tweed, who had been left outside the blow-out, had, during the conflict, thrown himself on the ground, and, rolling over, had succeeded in getting some distance from his captors, and as the Indians turned to flee, a warrior drew up by his side and endeavored to assist the villain to a seat on his pony. But before he could accomplish his purpose four rifles were turned upon him, and the next instant, savage, pony and Jerrold Tweed fell dead.

"Hoorah! victory and glory!" shouted Old Mustang Sam when the day had been won, and Caleb Arbuckle and Little Foxfire joined with him in rounds of lusty cheers.

Dumont walked over to Gypsy and said: "You are a good Indian-fighter, Gypsy—a heroic girl."

"Yes, God bless her sweet soul!" exclaimed Old Sam, "I never see'd anything look so heavenly as she did when we war beltin' it to them red-skins. If I wer'n't so danged old and ugly I'd set my cap for you, gal, I would, by snakes! Oh, ye needn't look so cross; I mean jist what I say. Ha! ha! ha!"

And, in spite of herself, Gypsy could not help laughing too at the odd old horse hunter.

"Well, what do you think, Arbuckle, 'bout them red-skins attacking us again?" asked Dumont.

"They'll never come nigh us without big reinforcements," replied the old detective; "but pass me your glass, Doc; I see a horseman watching in the edge of the grove over yander, and I want to see who—Oh! I see, I see! 'Tis a white man; and, would you believe it, it is Major Dan Martelle! Oh, that red-handed hellyon! You see now, don't you, that he's directin' the attack on us as he did on Jayne three years ago. That dead Luven was chased here to gain some information, which he undoubtedly communicated to him by takin' his hat off when he stood up there. But he'll not fool around another mule's heel soon, for he's deader'n the mother o' Pocahontas. The major must feel bad to see so many of his friends returning licked outen their moccasins."

"Yes, and his time will come, too," added Dumont, bitterly. "I have read the diary of Mahlon Jayne, which convinces me—in connection with what the Boy Spy overheard—that Jayne's death was caused that he might become the owner of Jayne's mine, which, it seems was wonderfully rich. How the change in the title to the mine was effected can only be guessed at. But these papers will I guard most sacredly until they are presented in evidence against Martelle."

"What if the major don't come back to Leadville?" asked Old Sam.

"No danger but he'll be back to the wealth of the Red Rock, for he undoubtedly thinks he is playing a desperate game in which his hand is not seen. But now, friends, the next thing is for us to begin our homeward journey."

"Yes, yes," decided Arbuckle, "and I'm a leetle afraid we'll have to fight every mile of the way if we keep the valley."

"We can do that and flourish," averred Old Sam, "for we're a band of fighters, from ugly Old Caleb down to that sweet little bit o' a female gal. But I would not advise starting until night sets in, and then I'd never foller the valley, where so many good places afford the Ingins an ambush. I tell ye they'll do the rest of their fightin' under kiver. I'd suggest we fall back ten or twenty miles and take the range for it. I'm at home on the open plain, whar I can have elbow room to spread myself."

Old Sam's suggestion was favorably received, and the party finally decided to act upon it as soon as night should set in.

Everything was made ready while it was yet light, and every man assigned the place he was to fill during the retreat homeward.

In view of his perfect knowledge of the plain Mustang Sam was assigned the lead. Dr. Dumont and the old detective were to ride with Gypsy, while Little Foxfire was to bring up the rear. In this order they finally set off as soon as it was dark.

Their horses being fresh they rode rapidly as was consistent with their safety, and when morning dawned they were many long miles away from the blow-out. Contrary to their most sanguine hopes, however, they discovered, shortly after daylight, that the Indians were hot on their trail. A race ensued which ended in the fugitives running across a body of United States soldiers that were then out in search of the raiding red-skins, who at sight of the soldiers vanished and were seen no more by Dumont and his party.

Thus ended their troubles from the redskins, and in due course of time the little band reached Leadville.

The news of Gypsy's return spread like wild-fire through the camp and soon half of the population flocked to the widow's residence to congratulate the mother and look again upon the Idol.

And among the very first to come and the last to leave was Major Dan Martelle! He had been back for two days from his prolonged "search for Gypsy in the fastnesses of the great mountains." In fact, he was the last of all the miners who had gone out in search of the maiden to return, and in consequence of the neglect of his great interest in the Red Rock for so many days, it was regarded as a great, self-sacrificing act that was so characteristic of the man's big, kind and generous heart.

But a surprise awaited the public as well as the self-sacrificing major.

Dumont and his party kept their secrets until the major was just leaving the widow's house, when Old Caleb Arbuckle confronted him with the announcement: "Major, I arrest you for the murder of Mahlon Jayne!"

CHAPTER XIV.
THE WOLF AT BAY.

THE arrest of the proprietor of the Red Rock for murder created a wild sensation throughout the camp. It was discussed in every cabin, saloon and by every camp-fire, and the general opinion seemed to be that there was a conspiracy headed by Dr. Dumont against the major. Secret meetings were held here and there. The doctor was openly insulted, sneered at and hooted on the street; but he bore it all with the defiance of one whose conscience was clear—satisfied that the trial of Martelle would establish his honor in the matter, and the guilt of the major.

Martelle himself was quite indignant. He did not believe that Dumont had any *prima facie* evidence against him. When in the valley he had sent Jerrold Tweed to the blow-out to watch the doctor and his friends and see if they unearthed any evidence there against him, and although Tweed was defeated in his game of espionage he felt satisfied by a personal examination of the blow-out after Dumont's party fled that they had found nothing for the ground was undisturbed. And supposing, furthermore, that his presence among the Indians had been kept a secret, he returned to Leadville fearing nothing.

The day of the preliminary trial came. The courtroom was packed almost to suffocation while hundreds failed to gain admittance at all.

Major Martelle came into the court-room calm, cool and defiant. His presence elicited a murmur of applause. He was accompanied by one of the ablest lawyers in the camp.

When Dr. Dumont came in he was greeted with hisses, groans and other demonstrations plainly portraying the feeling against him. He was accompanied by Old Caleb Arbuckle, who, being a criminal lawyer of no mean pretensions, was to prosecute the case for the State.

In his information the old detective charged the prisoner with inciting the Indians to murder Mahlon Jayne and Jack Miles, and in illegally and fraudulently possessing himself of Jayne's mining claim now known as the Red Rock.

Dr. Dumont was the first witness called for the prosecution. He testified as to the finding of the golden locket in the wild horse's shoulder some weeks previous while horse-hunting in company with Arbuckle in the Republican valley. He produced and read the slip of paper found in the locket giving him the clew to the death of Jayne and Miles, and which clew he had, with the assistance of Colonel Arbuckle and Little Foxfire followed up to the end.

The doctor was subjected to a rigid cross-examination in which Martelle and his lawyer endeavored to get him confused, but despite the brow-beatings he was forced to submit to, he came out cool, calm and triumphant.

Old Caleb was next placed upon the stand. His evidence was simply corroborative of Dumont's concerning the finding of the locket and the paper.

Then Little Foxfire was called.

As the boy advanced to the witness stand the spectators deliberately and loudly applauded him, for he was at that time regarded as the hero of Gypsy Jayne's rescue.

A dead silence fell upon all when, in a clear voice, that could be heard all over the court-room, the boy began his evidence.

"About two weeks ago," he said, "Doctor Dumont asked me to help him and Colonel Arbuckle in working out the mystery to Mahlon Jayne's death, seein' I was present at the time the Ingins killed him and his friend, though I didn't know then who they were. I consented to help, and the doctor sent me as a spy to the office of Major Martelle. I hid behind a coat on the wall, after the major re-

fused to hire me as a chore-boy, and there stood in a pair of big boots for three mortal hours.

"While there a man came in and handed the major a letter.

"The major was tickled so that he read it aloud to himself.

"But he wasn't tickled so much as he was, after he'd read it, for it was a letter from Miss Helen Jayne informing him of the recently-discovered clew to her father's death, and the news set him a-fumin'; but before he'd done much of it a second man came in. I couldn't see him, but it was some moments before the major recognized him as an old chum, Jerrold Tweed by name, whom he supposed was in prison for twenty years for murder.

"Tweed told the major he'd bribed the prison surgeon who'd got the Governor to let him out on the grounds of his dyin' with the consumption. He was to give the surgeon five thousand dollars for his work, and called on the major for the money. But the major grumbled, and said he was short owing to the purchase of some expensive machinery for the Red Rock. Tweed claimed a half interest in the Red Rock which his sentence for twenty years to prison had deprived him of. The major did not dispute his claim, but told Jerrold of the reported discovery of Jayne's massacre, and the suspicion of his having been the victim of a white man's treachery. Tweed said he wasn't afraid of an investigation, and promised that he would never reveal the fact that the major was working the other mine. Finally the major told Tweed that he was going to investigate the report about Jayne's death, and if his way was still clear, he would furnish him all the cash he needed."

"You'll now state when and where you last saw Major Martelle outside of Leadville, Foxfire," said Old Caleb.

"A week ago last night, when we were encamped in the Arkansas valley, I was sent out to reconnoiter a grove 'bout two miles from camp, and came upon an Ingins camp in a dry sink-hole, and with them Ingins was Major Martelle."

A buzz of excitement ran through the audience; the major's face turned visibly pale; the judge knitted his brows.

"I overheard the major givin' Crow Dog, the chief," Foxfire went on, "a sharp talkin' to for attackin' Dumont's party while travelin' down the valley—and then told him he wanted him to wait until Dumont turned up the valley before attackin' him. Finally he came to the conclusion we were travelin' to the blow-out where Mr. Jayne was killed, and said if there were any papers buried in that blow-out he'd have them first. But I got back to our camp, told my folks what I'd heard and we pushed out at once, found the blow-out and the buried papers, too."

As he concluded, Martelle started violently, for this was the first intimation he had had of the papers being found.

Colonel Arbuckle now arose and said:

"Your Honor, I desire now to offer in evidence extracts from the diary of Mahlon Jayne, found in the blow-out where he was killed on the night of the seventeenth of June, 187—."

The judge ordered the colonel to read them. He read as follows:

"June 10. I have worked hard on my claim all day—have named it 'The Cap Sheaf.' My friend, Martelle, calls his the Red Rock—they lay side by side. Martelle just come in; he's discouraged; thinks his claim worthless."

"June 11. To-night I am rejoiced; Martelle's discouraged. It has been demonstrated by assay that my claim is a big bonanza. I must comply with registration law and register my claim at once."

"June 12. The Cap Sheaf's my fortune. Received a letter from dear wife and children and have written them to come on to Leadville via U. P., at once."

"June 13. Sad news has reached me that my brother, Dave, of whom I had not heard in years, is dying at Fort Lyons. A special courier brings the news. Brother Dave wants me to come at once to his bedside. I must go at once, but my claim is not registered yet, nor is it safe to leave it without—some unscrupulous man might take advantage of my absence and jump it. But I'll arrange that; friend Martelle will register his to-morrow and I will have him register mine at same time. Jack Miles just come in. He's going with me to see Dave."

"June 14. In camp on way to Fort Lyons. Saw Martelle before I left this morning—he promises to register my claim, and should my family come look after their welfare and explain cause of my absence. Left a letter also."

"June 15. Traveled sixty miles to-day. Am feeling well, but anxious about my brother. Poor boy!"

"June 16. Another big day's travel and all's well."

"June 17. In blow-out in Arkansas valley surrounded by a horde of Indians. Unless succor comes we are lost. They charged us once but beat them back with loss of several warriors. They are now waiting no doubt for darkness to aid them. Oh, that I could leave a record of our fate, should we die, that my family might know the truth. Miles has suggested that we bury a record in a bottle we have in our possession trusting in the Lord that it may at some time fall into friendly hands. We see a white man among the Indians in the valley. I have scanned him closely with my glass. It looks for all the world like my friend Daniel Martelle, but it cannot be. Miles has just looked. He declares it is Martelle—I look again, and my God! I see it is my friend! What does it mean? Miles declares it's treachery. I tell him of the trust I imposed on Martelle the morning

we left Leadville, and he swears that Martelle proposes to own my claim. But Jack is certainly too severe on Martelle. He says he got a dislike to the major from his associations with Jerrold Tweed who murdered in cold blood, a friend of his. Ah! I now see Martelle directing the movements of the Indians! Why is he doing so? Is he trying to save us, or destroy us?—ah! here they come!—Another attack has been repelled. Night is coming on, and we intend to try and escape on horseback. Jack makes another novel suggestion—that I place another record inside of a tiny locket in my possession and slip it into an incision under skin of horse's shoulder so that if this record is never found, it may be if the animal escapes the savages. The idea is possible. I look at the face in the locket. It is that of my little daughter Gypsy. Poor child! she will probably never see her father again. May God protect her! Jack has just intimated that I may have been deceived into coming here by a false report of my brother's sickness. Jack is a strange fellow, but a true and brave man. His prejudices against Martelle make him suspicious. Can he be right? Can it be Martelle is at the bottom of all this? and, if so, is it that he may possess the Cap Sheaf? But this is only speculation. The only thing I can be certain of is Martelle's presence among the savages—a free agent, too. This is all I shall probably write herein, and so I subscribe my name,

"MAHLON JAYNE."

When the colonel concluded, a deep and deadly silence hung over the court and audience. Dan Martelle looked like a demon at bay; but suddenly rising to his full height, with eyes glaring and hands clinched, he fixed his eyes on Dumont and roared out, his whole frame shaking with passion:

"It's a forgery! This whole affair is a conspiracy and I will prove it before this matter ends, and—"

Here the judge called him to order, but he had had his say and the boldness with which he confronted his accusers and denounced them made a decided impression in his favor.

As it was nearly night the judge adjourned court until nine o'clock the next day, the sheriff taking charge of the prisoner.

Dumont, Arbuckle, Old Sam and Foxfire repaired at once to the doctor's office, and were discussing the trail when the door opened and a man in the uniform of a United States soldier entered.

"How are you, doctor?" he said advancing with extended hand toward Dumont.

"Why, it is Captain Barclay!" exclaimed the doctor, rising.

Captain Barclay was the commandant of the soldiers they had met on the plains the next morning after they had started on their return from the Arkansas valley.

"Yes, sir," the captain answered; "but I didn't expect to be in Leadville so soon when I last met you. But, doctor, your professional services are wanted immediately."

"Indeed! what is the nature of the case?"

"Gunshot wounds with little hopes," was the reply; "but that's only my opinion. You may think different."

The doctor procured his surgical instruments, his medicine case and then he and Captain Barclay left the office.

The soldier led the way through the town and down a ravine to where his company was encamped in and around a long log hut the soldiers had found vacant.

By this time it was dark, and a light was aglow in the hut into which the soldier conducted the doctor. Directly under a smoke-hole in the roof, a fire of pine sticks was burning, diffusing its light throughout the room.

In one corner of the apartment on a couch of blankets lay a man with his head bandaged.

The doctor advanced and looked down into his face, and despite his pale, pinched features and sunken eyes, he recognized him at a glance.

It was Jerrold Tweed!

CHAPTER XV.

OVERWHELMED AT LAST.

Doctor Dumont started. Captain Barclay smiled. "Good heavens!" exclaimed the doctor, "that man was left for dead in the Arkansas valley."

"Twice left for dead, doctor," said Tweed, starting at the sound of the doctor's voice; "you left me once and the gallant Major Martelle left me again."

"Tweed, I do not understand you," observed Dumont, confused.

"Well, you folks' bullet-wounded me, but I fell and lay feigning death for fear you'd finish your work. Some time after you left, Martelle and the Indians came up. I called to them and the major came down to where I lay. I told him you folks had gone. He swore and fumed with rage—cursed me for making a failure of the work assigned me. I asked him to help me—told him I was seriously hurt. 'Curse you!' he said, 'you'll be an incumbrance on my hands, that I'll be better off without in more ways than one;' and he drew a pistol and shot me, and turned and left me for dead. The soldiers came along and found me. I told them all, and prevailed on them to bring me here that I might get even with Martelle; and they done so, carrying me on a litter between two horses. I am told that the major is now under arrest, and having a preliminary trial."

"Yes, he is," responded Dumont.

"I want you to summon me as a witness, doctor. I can't live, and I know it; but neither shall Martelle."

"Tweed, let me examine your wounds; perhaps there may be some hopes."

"All right, doctor; but I'd as lief die now as any time."

The doctor, assisted by Barclay, examined the man's wounds, and shook his head.

"There's no chance for you, Tweed," he said. "Had you been taken when first wounded, you might have been saved. Gangrene has set in, and your time is short."

"I know it, doctor; but keep me alive, if you can, a day or two."

The doctor dressed his wounds, and gave him a stimulant.

Then he took his departure, and, obtaining a summons, had it served on the dying man.

The doctor found his friends awaiting him at his office when he returned, and the news he had for their ears fairly confounded them. But little sleep came to their eyes that night, for they now felt sure they had a witness, whose evidence, as a dying confession, could not be impeached.

In every place where two men were met the trial was discussed, and the general opinion seemed to prevail that Dr. Dumont was an adventurer, and that Major Martelle would come out triumphant in the end. But they little dreamed of the new witness to be put on the stand on the morrow, providing his life was spared.

By nine o'clock the next day the court-room was packed to its utmost. Martelle, looking unusually well, was in his place with his attorney at his side.

Dr. Dumont and Caleb Arbuckle, on entering the room, were greeted again with low hisses and murmurs of indignation.

"Have the prosecution any further evidence to offer?" the judge asked, when the court was duly opened.

"Yer honor," answered Arbuckle, "we have one more witness to put on the stand, and ask the patience of the court for a few minutes until he can be brought in."

The necessary time was granted, and Little Foxfire at once left the court-room.

During the intermission the buzz of voices was heard all over the room, and bets were freely made as to who and what the next witness would be.

Major Martelle talked with his attorney in a low tone, and laughed as though he regarded the whole affair a good joke; but at the same time he kept his ears open, to catch the sentiments of the crowd that was freely discussing the trial.

Bets as to the general result were made, and Dumont heard one fellow offer to go two to one that the doctor would be hung by a mob before night-fall.

And thus matters ran, until the bailiff was heard to say:

"Make way here, gentlemen, for these men!"

Instantly the crowd in the direction of the door parted, when, down the opening thus made, marched four soldiers carrying a litter on which lay the form of a man.

A dead silence, broken only by the shuffling of the soldiers' feet, fell upon the house, and everybody craned their necks to catch a glimpse of the new witness. But his face was covered with a silk handkerchief, and they were to be kept in a dread suspense for some moments.

None were more curious than Martelle himself. In fact, the judge, who was watching him closely, saw that he became nervous and pale.

A long table used as a writing-desk was arranged for the wounded man to lie upon; and when he was placed upon it, and his head propped up with a chair and blanket, the handkerchief was removed, and the pale, hollow-eyed face of Jerrold Tweed was revealed to the gaping audience.

And yet Dan Martelle did not recognize the face of the man until Tweed, raising his finger and pointing straight at the major, fairly shrieked in a wild and almost frenzied tone:

"Ha! I still live, Dan Martelle!"

"My God, 'tis Jerrold Tweed!" gasped the major, clutching at his throat as if suffocating, while his eyes seemed to turn glassy, and become set in his head.

For several moments Jerrold Tweed held his finger pointed straight at the prisoner, his sunken eyes gleaming with an unearthly light. It was a tragic scene—one never to be forgotten by those who witnessed it, and had that extended finger been the flaming sword of the avenging angel, Dan Martelle would not have cowered under it with more abject fear and terror.

When Jerrold Tweed removed his finger, he raised his hand, and turning his head, said:

"Swear me, judge."

The judge administered the oath.

"Jerrold Tweed," said Colonel Arbuckle, "how long have you known the prisoner at the bar—Dan Martelle?"

"I have known him for ten years," replied the wounded man in that strange tone which denotes the presence of death.

"Where did you first meet him?" asked the colonel.

"In St. Joe, when I enlisted under him in the famous band of outlaws known as the Kansas Nighthawks. He was our leader, Captain Night Hawk."

This evidence fairly electrified the audience.

"Of all the old band of Nighthawks," the witness continued, "the major and I are the only ones alive. After our band was broken up we came to Leadville. The place was just then beginning to boom. The major took a claim alongside that of one Mahlon Jayne. He called it the Red Rock and Mr. Jayne called his the Cap Sheaf. The two men became acquainted and their acquaintance grew into a warm friendship. I kept knocking about through the mountains looking for something better and found nothing. In the mean time, Mr. Jayne and Martelle bunked together. Mr. Jayne was a good, kind-hearted man and he got

to making so much of a confidant of the major as to tell him all about his family and friends. He told him he had a brother named David of whom he had heard nothing for years except that he had heard incidentally that he was in the standing army somewhere on the plains.

"In the course of time it was found that while Mr. Jayne's claim was a rich strike, Martelle's wouldn't pay the expenses of working. The major became discouraged. He sent for me one day and told me his disappointment and that he had conceived a plan by which he could easily and for a small sum, possess Jayne's claim. He told me that if I'd help him he would make me a half partner in business. I consented. He then wrote a letter purporting to come from the commandant at Fort Lyons saying that his brother David was there slowly dying and wanted to see him before he departed this life. I disguised myself and as a special carrier dashed up to their cabin one day, handed Jayne the letter and then rode away before he had time to ask any questions.

"The ruse worked like a charm. Jayne showed the letter to his friend Martelle who was very sorry for him. The next day Jayne set out with one Jack Miles for Fort Lyons, but before he left asked Martelle to have his claim registered under the regulation laws of the camp. This was a stroke of luck we had not counted upon, and so the major in the descriptions of the claims changed the name of his claim to that of Jayne's and Jayne's to his, so that the Cap Sheaf became the Red Rock. But this did not complete the work. Jayne must be got rid of and the major concluded to intercept him in the Arkansas valley and put him out of the way. And to make sure of his work he struck out for the Indian village, I going with him, to secure the assistance of the Indians to do the work of death. In the days of the Nighthawks we always found the village of Black Owl a safe retreat. Martelle had a wonderful influence over the chief.

"On our way we met Owl and nearly a hundred warriors on the lookout for miners reported prospecting upon his grounds. Martelle made his wants known to the chief who readily consented to grant his favor, and away we went to the Arkansas valley and after a hot chase of two days came upon the miners and killed them in a blow-out where they'd taken shelter."

Here Tweed stopped and was given a sip of water to moisten his parched lips.

The silence in the room was almost painful.

Martelle leaned over and whispered to his lawyer who shook his head.

"Well, what followed the death of Jayne, Jerrold?" Arbuckle asked.

"Martelle and I came back to Leadville, and that same night I had a difficulty with a miner and killed him, for which I was sent to the penitentiary for twenty years. A few weeks ago I escaped and came to Leadville, and found my friend Martelle the proprietor of the Red Rock. As an escaped convict I knew I could not become his partner as we had previously arranged, but I asked for some financial help. He reluctantly agreed to give it providing I would assist in another scheme—that of abducting Gypsy Jayne and car—"

Here he was interrupted by an outburst of indignation that required the stern order of the judge to subdue.

"I consented to assist him again," Tweed went on. "His object in having the girl carried away was that he might have an excuse to leave the camp—ostensibly to hunt the girl—but that he might again get into the Arkansas valley to repeat his crime of murder to cover up the murder of Mr. Jayne. He had learned that a clew to Jayne's murder had been found, and through his detective, who crept under the floor of Dr. Dumont's office and applied his ear to a crack he learned the whole particulars of the movement on foot against him. He learned that Mahlon Jayne had seen him among the Indians directing their movements, and before his death had left a record in a bottle of the whole affair, charging Martelle with treachery. The finding of another account of the affair by some wild-horse hunters led to a knowledge of the bottled paper being buried where Jayne was killed. So, in view of these facts, Martelle not only wanted those papers, but Dr. Dumont and his friends, Foxfire and Colonel Arbuckle, out of the way, so that his title to the Red Rock would never be questioned again. We succeeded in abducting Gypsy and escaping with her to White Chalk, a bluff on the Arkansas, where Martelle was to have met us and paid me some money. But that night my companion, the major's detective, was killed by some falling rocks, and, while I was digging him out Little Foxfire spirited Gypsy away—"

"Hurrah for Little Foxfire!" yelled an old miner. "Fine me for contempt, judge, if you like, but it had to come out or it 'd 'a' killed me."

The judge warned him not to repeat the contempt and then told the witness to go on.

"I waited at White Chalk," continued Tweed, "until the major came; but when he found Gypsy gone and his detective dead his fury knew no bounds. He refused to give me the money he'd promised me until Dumont and his party was out of the way. I went with him to the camp of the Indians that he had again pressed into his service. He then suggested that, as I was unknown to the doctor and his friends, I go to Dumont's camp, which was in the blow-out where Jayne was killed, and communicate to him by certain motions the force of Dumont's party, and the best time to dash upon them. This I did, but Little Foxfire recognized me, and Caleb Arbuckle arrested me just as I was about to signal that the papers had been found. I had already signaled for the Indians to charge, and soon after I

was bound, they dashed out of the woods and rode furiously toward the blow-out. But they were beaten back when victory seemed in their grasp. An Indian rode up to me—I having rolled myself some distance from the blow-out during the fight—and endeavored to assist me on his horse behind it, but a volley from the blow-out killed the Indian and seriously wounded me. I lay there, apparently dead, until night. I heard, and even saw Dumont and his party leave under cover of night, and some time afterward, Martelle and the Indians came up. I called to the major. He came cursing to where I laid. I told him I was wounded and asked him to help me. He said I should no longer be an incubance, and drawing his revolver, he shot me, dead, as he supposed, and left. The next day the soldiers came along and I appealed to them for help and mercy, and they gave it. On a litter between two horses, they carried me hundreds of miles, that I might testify against Dan Martelle. And this I make under oath, on the verge of the grave, as a dying confession. Oh, my God, have mercy on me!"

As he concluded, the audience seemed to resolve itself into a wild and frantic mob which only the judge with the assistance of the sheriff, with two drawn revolvers could quell after several attempts to get at the prisoner.

The tide had turned and Martelle was doomed. The villain saw it, and snatching a pistol from the sheriff's belt turned and drew it upon the heart of Dr. Dumont, but his murderous design was thwarted by the quick hand of Caleb Arbuckle. But before the weapon could be wrested from him, he placed the muzzle to his own head and fired, and without a moan sunk lifeless.

And thus by his own motion had the case against him ended here to be renewed again at the bar of God.

Dr. Fred Dumont had thus accomplished the work he had set out to do, and in which he would have failed had he not been a man of iron nerve, indomitable will, and called to his help brave, fearless and skillful assistance. And while the young doctor could not restore to Mrs. Jayne her beloved husband he had the mine for which his life had been sacrificed, through an order of the court, turned over to her with all its improvements and appurtenances.

And for all his troubles in the matter he felt that he had been abundantly rewarded when, a year later, he led to the altar of married bliss the fair and lovely Helen Jayne.

The name of the Red Rock mine was changed to that of the Gypsy Jayne, and Dr. Fred Dumont became its superintendent.

Old Mustang Sam returned to the calling he loved so well and is now somewhere on the southern pampas.

Colonel Arbuckle, the Mountain Detective, is still "in harness" the terror to evil-doers, road-agents and outlaws.

Little Foxfire has grown to manhood. Through the influence of Dr. Dumont the boy gave up the nomadic life and calling at which he had won distinction as a Boy Spy, and became deeply interested in obtaining an education and a knowledge of the business affairs of life. And besides these nobler aims, the future holds in store for him a rich reward in the love of the bright and beautiful girl, Gypsy Jayne.

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